RBM:

A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage

Volume Twenty-Three, Number 2, Fall 2022

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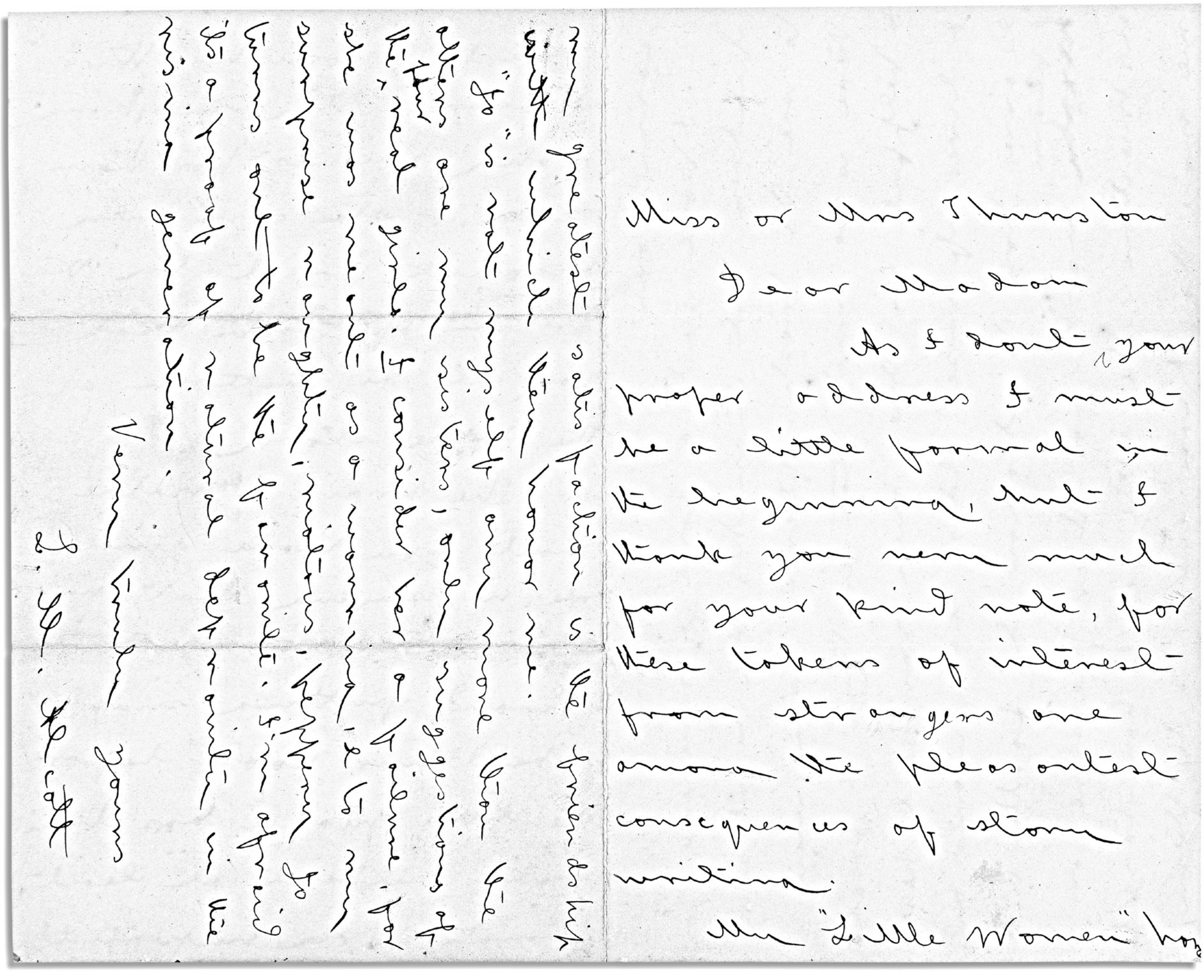
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Dear Madam
As I don't your
proper address I must
be a little formal in
the beginning, but I
thank you very much
for your kind note, for
these tokens of interest
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consequences of story
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On the Cover:
An illustration from Jo Mora, "The Dying Wolf's Request," *The Animals of Aesop: Aesop's Fables Adapted and Pictured* (Boston: Dana Estes & Co., 1900).

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Richard Saunders

Editor's Note

This issue's editorial reflection is sparked by the two articles selected for this issue of *RBM*. As a professional librarian I've worked in Carnegie classification R1, R2, and M2 institutions. As a practicing historian I've done site-specific research in academic libraries between St. Paul and Austin, from Berkeley to New Haven, and a lot of places in between. Over the past thirty years I've talked with hundreds of librarians and archivists in scores of different places, from local "treasure" rooms of small, isolated public libraries to the research rooms of the nation's largest institutions. As I've listened to the thumping heart of working libraries I am consistently impressed by the good graces of people from small places, and often frustrated by the sometimes inexplicably pedantic assumptions and requirements made by large research institutions. These articles have prompted me to reflect what *best practice* really means. I've concluded that on the whole, librarians have been far too easily impressed by what other librarians are doing. As a result librarians have failed to equate "best practice" with evidence-based practice.

Perhaps the root of the question lies in the age-old conundrum: how does one measure a measuring stick? Measurements are, by nature, mutual agreements because there is no naturally occurring inch. I'm coming to realize that in a quest for policy uniformity we may be doing ourselves a disservice. Are we too much alike to be "special" collections anymore? I don't have an answer but I do have some provocative thoughts on this point.

One may add virtually any item to a special collections, and for very good institutional reasons. That doesn't mean that the item is inherently valuable. So why does our discipline tacitly insist on the "best practice" premise that everything in special collections cannot be circulated beyond the reading room? Or that we all require the same suite of skills? Is there more than one standard at play? I can think of several possible reasons for material being added: comparative rarity and/or high intrinsic value are the low-hanging-fruit standards, but there are others as well: topic reflection of an institutional mission or collection focus, receipt as part of a larger gift that will be maintained as a unit (a book collection), and one can never minimize relational politics, where an item is accepted because a department or dean fears to offend a current or prospective donor. General reserve collections are a similar special collection, and yet we seem to be much more selective of the content, and favor use there.

That led my wandering mind to another question: I wonder if special collections librarians' eagerness to keep up with the Jones' Library has given some classes of institutions far more effect on the discipline than may be merited. Standards foster consistency between institutions, yes, but it is unlikely that there is really a "standard" special collections. If there were, then really nothing besides the collection contents would be special. As reflected in the Thomas article in this issue, after nearly thirty years of working in academic libraries I am becoming increasingly skeptical that large research institutions adequately represent the realities in which most academic librarians work. Oh, I understand the need for policy and procedure. It has made me wonder, however, whether the reason we have policies and procedure is to *facilitate* use, and perhaps less to preserve books as untouched objects which are never aged by handling. If the purpose for libraries is to foster scholarship and inquiry, then perhaps large ARL libraries might see the wisdom of adopting user-centric "best practices" from smaller, less well-staffed institutions.

Smaller institutions tend to be far more generous with their holdings, as well. I experienced a first-hand instance myself only last year. I was developing a class and wanted a good, sharp image of an egregiously racist illustration printed in a particularly rare book of nineteenth-century pseudoscience. Few copies existed in large research institutions and due to procedures, access requirements to those copies were rigid—in my opinion, unnecessarily rigid. Of the two libraries that did have it in their collection, neither was willing to follow my camera setting requirements for photographing the image. One was willing to allow me to photograph the volume if I travelled there to do so and with many other limiting requirements. In other words, I could get it their way or no way. On a whim I put in an ILL request. A small rural college simply pulled the book from their shelves, where it had been quietly for over 150 years, and sent it to me asking merely that I handle it carefully. If the fundamental purpose of a library is the extension of human knowledge, which was the best practice?

Now, the caveat to fostering an idealized kinder, gentler librarianship is the problem faced by any institution: the misuse of material by a small handful of unethical users. There are far too many rare-book thefts from inadequately sustained collections. Only one theft or misuse is required to heighten concern about everything else. But why is the most restrictive practices of the largest institutions the best practice? Part of the answer is because the library discipline has come to equate wealth and size with sophistication. Lynne Thomas's article invites us to consider just how adequately larger institutions reflect general experience—and therefore whether they should be the standards they have become.

Sigrid Anderson et al.'s article on exhibits and large classes invites readers to consider best practice in specific contexts and then to draw inference about how that might compare with readers' own circumstances. It is an example of "best practice" distilling from actual practice rather than mere abstractions of policy. As the authors note, "a growing *range* of approaches to student-curated exhibits is emerging in the professional literature" (emphasis added). In other words *best practice* is not a singularity. Each reader may learn from these authors' experience, adjusting for their individual contexts and in interpreting how "large" applies.

So I invite readers to question their own on best practice. Given your collection, your mission, your internal politics, what constitutes *best?* The answers might not be the standard list of restrictions we users so often encounter.

Sigrid Anderson, Kristine Greive, Juli McLoone, and Jo Angela Oehrli

Collaborative Curation: Best Practices for Student Exhibits with Large Classes

As college and university special collections become more invested and successful in campus outreach, the demand for intensive instruction services, particularly student-curated exhibits, has increased. Supporting this type of experiential learning for large classes is particularly challenging. The authors of this paper suggest specific, practical steps for best practices in implementing student-curated exhibits with large classes by drawing on their experiences with four such exhibits at the University of Michigan, curated by classes ranging from twenty-five to one hundred students. Crucial elements include advance communication, collaboration across library units, the use of scaffolded instruction sessions, pre-selection of materials, and integration of assessment into the learning experience.

As college and university special collections become more invested and successful in campus outreach, the demand for intensive instruction services has increased. In recent years, the University of Michigan Library Special Collections Research Center has received more frequent requests to provide instruction to large classes and to support projects other than the traditional research paper, such as exhibit curation. Although this is an exciting trend, meeting these demands can be challenging. Since winter 2017, the authors have supported student-curated online and physical exhibits by a variety of classes, including classes of more than 50 students. Repeated iterations and variations on this project have helped us develop guidelines for successful student-curated exhibits with large classes.

Student-curated exhibits are an excellent example of the surge in experiential and project-based learning happening across higher education. The Association of American Colleges & Universities identifies these types of active learning experiences as High-Impact Educational Practices.[1] A cross-institutional, longitudinal study conducted using data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education indicates that the active and collaborative learning experiences fostered through High-

1. George D. Kuh, "High-Impact Educational Practices," Association of American Colleges & Universities, https://www.aacu.org/node/4084 [accessed 14 February 2020].

Impact Educational Practices enhance meaningful learning outcomes including critical thinking skills and intercultural effectiveness.[2] Instructors and students value the transferable skills gained through researching and writing exhibit labels, as well as the enduring object (a physical or online exhibit) that disseminates the results of that work. In addition, exhibit curation requires students to work closely with primary sources, supporting progress toward ACRL's Primary Source Literacy Guidelines 3 (Read, Understand, and Summarize) and 4 (Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate).[3]

A growing range of approaches to student-curated exhibits is emerging in the professional literature. Bradley, Wermager, and Silberblatt describe the development of an artists' book exhibition by a seminar course. This class of six students' deep involvement in all aspects of the exhibition—from concept to publicity—compresses the entire exhibit process into a single semester of regular special collections sessions.[4] Hansen describes a similar model for a class exhibit of medieval books, but she notes the strain of working in this way with 15 students. A class of this size makes it more challenging to build consensus and collaboration to the degree this model requires.[5] She ultimately suggests either a smaller class size or a necessarily smaller degree of student autonomy. Prendergast and Totleben provide a recent case study that departs from this comprehensive seminar model. They describe a 16-person class curating a Don Quixote exhibit based on just two special collections sessions. In this case, students were given more definition for their individual contributions and roles, which helped maintain both pedagogical rigor and a sense of collaboration.[6] Others have written about expanding a similar approach from a single course to ongoing programs, either across a range of courses[7] or as a partnership with a particular academic unit.[8] In the latter case, one class notably included more than 40 students across several sections.

2. Cindy A. Kilgo, Jessica K. Ezell Sheets, and Ernest T. Pascarella, "The Link between High-Impact Practices and Student Learning," *Higher Education* 69, no. 4 (April 2015): 509–25.

3. ACRL RBMS-SAA Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy, "Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy," Society of American Archivists, https://www2.archivists.org/standards/guidelines-for-primary-source-literacy [accessed 14 February 2020].

4. Laurel Bradley, Kristi Wermager, and Gabriel Perri Silberblatt, "Exhibiting Artists' Books: Three Perspectives from a Curatorial Seminar," in *Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives*, eds. Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012), 237–41.

5. Marianne Hansen, "Real Objects, Real Spaces, Real Expertise: An Undergraduate Seminar Curates an Exhibition on the Medieval Book of Hours," in *Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives*, eds. Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012), 240.

6. Ryan Prendergast and Kristen Totleben, "Course Design, Images, and the Class-Curated Exhibit," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 19, no. 2 (2018).

7. Jennie Davy and Amy C. Schindler, "Student Curators in the Archives: Class Curated Exhibits in Academic Special Collections," in *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, ed. Sarah Theimer (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

8. Katherine Crowe, Robert Gilmor, and Rebecca Macey, "Writing, Archives and Exhibits: Piloting Partnerships between Special Collections and Writing Classes," *Alexandria: The Journal of National and International Library and Information Issues* 29, no. 1/2 (2019).

In addition to the conversation about models for student-curated exhibits, the pedagogy of exhibit label writing fits into principles espoused in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs, as well as a growing interest in public scholarship. A core principle of WAC pedagogy is that "writing is highly situated."[9] In practice, this means that students need to be familiarized with genres to prepare them to write in an unfamiliar rhetorical situation, such as exhibit label writing. Exhibit labels are both an unfamiliar genre and an opportunity for students to write for their peers or a public audience, a practice that, Phegley argues, "inspires them to do their best work."[10] Phegley's finding about the beneficial effects of writing for a public audience is echoed by Davidson, who discovered that student writing online "was incomparably better than in traditional papers" because it was aimed at their peers and a public audience.[11] DeSpain used the public aspect of exhibit labels to help students grasp the genre when she had them create Omeka exhibits in her book history course. To help students conceptualize their exhibits and craft the accompanying text, she asked them to craft an audience analysis. This process helped them imagine their exhibit as public scholarship by considering "who will interact with their materials, what might attract them, and how they will respond."[12] The foundational text on exhibit labels is Serrell's *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, which outlines in detail how to approach label writing as well as how to think about audience.[13] Understanding audience expectations is a key step in helping students master an unfamiliar genre, and exhibit label writing can be an important element of writing pedagogy.

This article enters the conversation on student curation and exhibit label writing from the perspective of working with large, lecture-based courses at the University of Michigan. When there are more than 25 students in a class, managing the workload and ensuring appropriate treatment of materials presents additional challenges. Rather than describing case studies in detail, we draw on our experience with four class exhibits from 2017 to 2020 to suggest action-oriented guidelines for successfully scaling up student-curated exhibits. By presenting best practices, we hope to encourage colleagues in a variety of institutional contexts to feel confident embarking on student-curated exhibits. Key elements explored below include: ingredients for a successful planning phase with instructors and library colleagues,

9. Michelle Cox et al., "Statement of WAC Principles and Practices," Colorado State University, https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/principles/statement.pdf [accessed 2 September 2020].

10. Jennifer Phegley, "Rethinking Student Research and Writing in the Digital Age: The Punch Historical Archive, 1841–1992 and the NINES Classroom Exhibit Space," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 48, no. 2 (2015): 183–96.

11. Cathy Davidson, "Collaborative Learning for the Digital Age," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, https://www.chronicle.com/article/collaborative-learning-for-the-digital-age/ [accessed 18 March 2021].

12. Jessica DeSpain, "On Building Things: Student-Designed Print and Digital Exhibits in the Book History Class," *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 22, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 32.

13. Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

considerations for exhibit-oriented library instruction lesson plans, and opportunities for assessment and improvement of student exhibit projects.

Student-Curated Exhibits: 2017–2020

The 200- and 300-level courses that this article is based on followed a similar structure: Librarians met with classes two to four times to provide the following: 1) an initial orientation to using special collections materials; 2) guidance on finding relevant secondary source research; 3) an introduction to exhibit labels as a genre; and, in some cases, 4) an opportunity for peer review. Because these classes were too large and time was too limited to permit much thematic exploration or consensus-building, instructors and librarians created the exhibit scaffolding by preselecting a large body of potential items within predetermined themes or topics. In each case, the students, alone or in pairs, selected a specific item to research, wrote a 200–250-word exhibit label, and chose the page opening(s) to be displayed. Classes with more than 25 students selected items and wrote labels alone or collaboratively with one other student. Page openings were scanned or photographed by the Library's Digital Conversion Unit, and the online exhibits were published through an institutionally hosted Omeka platform.[14] Two classes launched their exhibits with in-person celebrations, while one received a commemorative bookmark.

In discussing learning outcomes, instructors universally expressed a desire for students to focus on research and writing, rather than the technical infrastructure or metadata involved in building online exhibits, so students were not expected to learn to use Omeka. Once learning outcomes and the basic parameters of the project were agreed upon, course instructors wrote the formal assignment and determined how students would be graded, while librarians developed or tweaked lesson plans and handouts for the library sessions. While largely written separately, these materials were shared so instructors knew what instruction the library was providing and librarians knew the details of the assignment and expectations for students' work.

The first of the four exhibits we will discuss took place in winter 2017, when approximately 80 students in a 300-level English class curated *Jane Austen 1817–2017: A Bicentennial Exhibit*.[15] Librarians preselected about 70 items in three topical areas: Historical Context and Background, Jane Austen Editions, and Fans and Readers. Students attended an introductory library session during which they met with a special collections librarian for an introduction to safe handling and exhibit labels

14. Other platforms for student-curated exhibits could include Wordpress, Scalar, or even social media sites like Instagram or Tumblr.

15. Students of ENG 313 Jane Austen, "Jane Austen 817-2017: A Bicentennial Exhibit," MLibrary Online Exhibits (last modified 2017), https://www.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/jane-austen-bicentennial.

and with the English language and literature subject specialist to gain hands-on experience with literary research databases. Each of the discussion sections attended a second library session, in which students chose a single item to research with a partner and write a label. The resulting exhibit featured 36 distinct items.

In winter 2018, approximately 50 students in a 300-level English class curated Seven Fantasy Classics for Children.[16] Librarians preselected around 100 books representing several classic children's stories, such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "Little Red Riding Hood," and "The Little Mermaid." In addition to writing exhibit labels in pairs, each student was required to compose an essay comparing multiple editions of the same text, one of which was the item they chose for the exhibit. This class met with librarians three times. An introductory session was held early in the semester, with the class split between a special collections librarian and the children's literature subject specialist. For this course, the discussion of writing for exhibits was expanded into a second small group session consisting of 25 students and included hands-on practice editing labels from past exhibits. The third session ensured that students could spend time looking in detail at their book with their partner and offered an opportunity to consult with librarians about roadblocks encountered in their secondary source research. The exhibit featured 25 editions of children's stories.

The classes discussed so far spread the exhibit project across the semester. However, in fall 2018, a 200-level US history survey course structured as a series of intensive units required a different approach. In this case, four discussion sections (groups of 12–25 students totaling approximately 75) met in the library for four consecutive weeks to rapidly select and research items for *Scrapbook of American History: From the Revolution to the Civil War.*[17] Librarians preselected about 80 texts representing seven themes, such as Food and Drink, Description and Travel, and Slavery and Abolition.

There were notable alterations to the content of the Scrapbook of American History sessions. First, the label-writing session included a lesson on writing more accessible labels by including a physical description of salient points of the item. We also added a peer-review session. Secondary source research was covered in a previous unit of this course and thus was not part of the instruction for this project. The student assignment also changed for this exhibit. As well as the exhibit label, each pair of students submitted an introduction to the thematic section their

16. Students of ENG 313 Children's Literature and the Invention of Modern Childhood, "Seven Fantasy Classics for Children," MLibrary Online Exhibits (last modified 2018), https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/seven-fantasy-classics.

17. Students of History 260: United States to 1865, "Scrapbook of American History: From the Revolution to the Civil War," MLibrary Online Exhibits (last modified 2018), https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/scrapbook-of-am-history.

label belonged to. For each section, one student contribution was published in the online exhibit. Students also submitted reflective essays on their experience to the course instructor. This exhibit featured 36 distinct publications.

We followed a compressed timeline again for a smaller, 25-student version of the children's literature course in winter 2020. Librarians preselected 67 editions of animal fables and fairy tales for "A Menagerie of Animal Tales."[18] This time, a full session was devoted to secondary-source research. Additionally, students were provided with a handout during each session to help guide them and provide a space for written reflection. When the University of Michigan discontinued in-person classes and closed the physical library in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students had already identified page openings and scanning was largely completed. Going above and beyond the call of duty, staff in the Digital Conversion Unit completed the scans as the shutdown was in progress. Students were able to submit their exhibit label text virtually, and the resulting exhibit featured 22 publications.

Best Practices

Based on our experiences with these four classes of varying sizes and pedagogical structures, we now propose a number of best practices to make student-curated exhibits maximally successful and minimally stressful for all involved, with a particular focus on managing large classes. The core elements are as follows: 1) communication and collaboration with stakeholders; 2) careful scaffolding and organization of library instruction sessions; 3) management of physical materials; and 4) assessment. Our experience and focus are primarily on classes curating online exhibits. The principles below also apply to physical exhibits, but there will be additional considerations based on available space, conservation staff, and so on that are not addressed here.

Communicate with Instructors in Advance

Ideally, conversations with instructors should begin four to six months before the project begins and before syllabi are finalized or institutional scanning schedules set. Many instructors will not have prior experience with exhibits and will benefit from a detailed walk-through of the necessary components and process of exhibit curation. Keep in mind that, with a large class, individual student contributions are necessarily smaller and more structured to make the project manageable.

In these conversations, librarians can work with instructors to clarify learning outcomes, assignment details, and the number of library visits. Decide together

18. Students of ENG 313 Children's Literature and the Invention of Modern Childhood, "A Menagerie of Animal Tales," MLibrary Online Exhibits (last modified 2020), https://www.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/animaltales.

exactly what each student will produce for the exhibit and how the exhibit project connects to overall goals for the course. Discuss the outcomes students will be expected to demonstrate. These outcomes could center on interpreting primary sources, situating primary sources in historical and scholarly context, or producing public scholarship. In some cases, instructors will want to pair the exhibit label writing assignment with a longer writing assignment or a reflection paper to offer further opportunities to engage with the materials. Each of these decisions influences the structure of the assignment and the content of librarian-led sessions.

These conversations are also important for setting expectations for everyone's roles. Discuss how best to balance the librarians' responsibility for introducing students to primary source materials and overseeing the exhibit creation with the instructors' responsibility to craft and assess learning outcomes. It is important for instructors or teaching assistants to play a role in the writing and editing process, through methods like giving students feedback or editing the final label submissions for accuracy. Finally, assign responsibility for writing the introduction to the exhibit. When working with a large number of students, it is particularly important that everyone has a shared understanding of the exhibit timeline, assignment details, and roles and responsibilities. It is harder to make changes on the fly with a large class, and misunderstandings can multiply if students are not receiving consistent messaging.

Collaborate with Colleagues

At many institutions, building an exhibit requires partnering with library colleagues across multiple units. Alongside conversations with instructors, be sure to make appropriate arrangements for the storage and organization of the materials used for the class and communicate that information to everyone staffing the reading room. Given that a large class might mean several students arriving in the reading room at once, or a large amount of material on hold, these arrangements should be as clear and straightforward as possible. A printed copy of all the items students in the class will be consulting is helpful, both for staff and student reference. It is also valuable to work with relevant subject specialists. Secondary research is essential to a quality exhibit, and bringing in a subject specialist for instruction and research support gives students a contact with expertise in research strategies. Involving the subject specialist in discussions about the exhibit goals and selecting materials ensures that they understand the types of research and resources that students need to complete the project and can offer expertise when needed. Depending on the structure of your institution, you may also need to reach out to colleagues responsible for digitizing rare materials to ensure that the timing and volume of exhibit material can be integrated into their schedule.

Scaffold Instruction Sessions to Build Skills

Building an exhibit is a complex assignment involving unfamiliar skills, so building lesson plans around a sequence of skills that build on one another is crucial for keeping student learning on track. With limited opportunities to interact with students, a thoughtful, scaffolded approach helps make the most productive use of class time. Scaffolding is an educational method from the constructivist school of educational theory that is defined by Fitzgerald and Larkin as the instructional support that teachers provide to students as they master a task. An essential element of scaffolding involves providing tailored assistance as needed to students through a variety of educational methods. Educational support is slowly removed as students master a task on their own.[19] Librarians can support student learning by breaking the process down into a series of scaffolded steps, while slowly giving the students more autonomy as they curate the exhibit.

We have found the most success with a sequence of four sessions that each focus on a specific skill: handling and observation of special collections materials, exhibit writing as a genre, secondary source research, and peer review. Beginning with hands-on exploration of special collections materials empowers students and invites them to take ownership of the project. Exhibit writing should also be addressed early on so students understand what the end product of their research will look like. Once students have selected an object and conceptualized the project, they are in a strong position to do effective secondary research that contextualizes their object. In the case of one of the classes we worked with, students had already met with the relevant subject specialist earlier in the semester for another project. However, it became clear that they would have benefited from a second session within the exhibit unit, as some students struggled to transfer those skills to a new context. Finally, a peer review session provides an opportunity to bring closure to the project. By providing feedback to each other, students apply various skills addressed throughout the project. It also gives students a chance to situate their own work in the context of the exhibit as a whole, something that can otherwise be challenging when an exhibit is created by a large group of students.

Consider Timing and Mode of Instruction

Scheduling library sessions over four consecutive weeks helps students retain information from one session to the next and provides the sense of a more cohesive project. We also found this model to be more manageable from a staff perspective than spreading sessions across the semester. While those four weeks are very intense, given that each session is generally repeated for two to four sections, this schedule frees up mental space and allows time to focus on other classes at other times. When sessions are spaced out, it's harder to build rapport with students and more repetition of information becomes necessary. Additionally, even though

19. Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald and Martha J. Larkin, "Scaffolding," *Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology*, ed. Neil J. Salkind (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), 864.

this model means more students may be consulting materials in the reading room in a short time, the influx is sometimes easier to manage when it occurs within a more constrained, predictable time period. Regardless of when library sessions are held, it is vital to ensure that student labels and scanning are both complete with enough time to build the exhibit before the end of the semester so that students can see the finished product. In our particular circumstance, we have found that it is best to allow at least two or three weeks to take care of any final label revision, upload and enter metadata for images, and finalize the online exhibit.

Manage Materials to Support Large Classes

How much latitude will students have in selecting materials for their exhibit? Creating a predetermined list of possible items helps streamline the logistics of requesting, pulling, and circulating materials. To retain a sense of agency, students should still have the ability to examine and choose from many options. In practice, we offer about twice as many items as will ultimately be featured in the exhibit. It is also advisable to select sturdy items in good condition that are suitable for handling by a large number of students in a short time.

Support Productive and Responsible Hands-On Learning

The sheer number of students in large classes makes close monitoring of materials usage difficult. At the same time, students encountering primary source materials for the first time may need active support to confidently handle and interpret those materials. The simplest method to improve monitoring and provide greater support is to find ways to divide the class into manageable groups. Consider the capacity of available instruction spaces in comparison to the number of students enrolled in the class and find a way to make those numbers match. For us, the magic number is between 20 and 25, and we have used all the following methods to get to that number. Large lecture classes often have discussion sections, and it may be straightforward to arrange staggered library visits in those sections. Alternatively, it may be possible to schedule a small number of one-time "lab sessions" outside of regular class time. If your usual special collections instruction spaces are very small, consider the feasibility of using other library spaces. We sometimes use a flexible gallery space that is typically booked for large lectures or catered celebrations. Library facilities staff provides temporary tables and chairs in the space, and librarians clean the tables as an additional precaution before laying materials out.

Another course of action is to divide the students into two or more simultaneously taught groups during their regular class meeting time. The sessions can cover the same content in two spaces, or one group can learn research methods while the other examines the material. Students can switch from one group to the other half-way through the class, or sessions can be arranged on multiple days, so all students participate in each for a full class period.

Finally, if you have adequate space and an appropriate amount of staff, it is possible to host a large group of students working with materials all at once. This may require reaching out to colleagues who do not usually do instruction and providing them with an orientation. Be mindful of the materials selected in this case, as the sheer size of the space needed for such classes means that, when intervention is needed, staff may be on the other side of a large room.

Support Students in Exhibit Label Writing

A notable feature of exhibit labels is that they are brief (anywhere from 50 to 250 words), and students will need familiarity with the genre to understand what to include and what can be omitted. In accordance with Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) principles of teaching genre, plan to support their writing process with discussion, instruction, and lots of examples. We have also drawn heavily on Serrell's detailed guidance on writing exhibit labels in developing our instruction materials. Consider using examples from past exhibits written by staff. Being invited to critique and improve professional labels gives students confidence in their own ability to offer valuable insight (see Appendix A: Writing Exhibit Labels Handout). In addition, coordinating the overall narrative and style of the exhibit descriptions requires oversight from librarians and the course instructor.

Best practices for online exhibit writing also includes writing accessible descriptions of the exhibit items for visitors with low vision or those who use screen readers. Depending on your platform, this could be supported by instructing students on writing alternative text (alt text) that clearly communicates the key points of the image, primarily for website visitors who cannot see the image. Alternatively, short descriptions can be integrated into the label text itself. In addition to making the exhibit more accessible, working with students on visual description encourages them to invest energy in their physical and visual analysis of the item.

After drafting their labels, students will need time and structured opportunities for editing. This is crucial for ensuring the quality and consistency of the exhibit. Ideally, there are three layers of editing. Peer review can provide useful feedback and allow students to get a better feel for and sense of ownership of the exhibit outside of their specific item (see Appendix B: Peer Review Worksheet). At the beginning of a peer review, we ask students to think about what was helpful and not helpful in past peer-review experiences. This provides the basis for an agreement on how to proceed with the review. We also discuss what to do with feedback, specifically the idea that not all feedback needs to be incorporated and that feedback from different people often conflicts. We try to group students together working within the same section of the exhibit so they can also consider how the objects they've selected relate to each other and see if any information is repeated or absent within the overall theme.

After peer review, the course instructor or graduate student instructor may provide additional feedback, either to individual students or by offering general pointers based on a review of the drafts as a whole. Finally, librarians may need to lightly revise for length, establish consistency of tone across the exhibit, and address any remaining inaccuracies or infelicities of phrasing. Length is the most common issue requiring correction, as many students struggle with the strict word limit required by the exhibit label genre.

Learn from Assessment

Angelo describes assessment as:

> an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.[20]

Our approach to assessment follows the spirit of Angelo's framework. Assessment informs our instruction as we teach and also provides the students with moments of introspection about their learning. Because these exhibit projects are time-intensive, gathering feedback from students is an important means of gauging how effectively that time was spent and improving our work with future classes. We recommend incorporating in-class assessment, end-of-semester surveys, reflective writing, and analysis of student labels. Varied forms of assessment provide multiple ways to receive student feedback.

Throughout the exhibit process, each session can conclude with a short **writing prompt**. A minimalist approach might be an index card with just two questions:

> At this point in the exhibit process, I feel most confident about __________.
>
> At this point in the exhibit process, I am still unsure about __________.

20. Thomas A. Angelo, "Reassessing (and Defining) Assessment," *AAHE Bulletin* 48 (1995): 7.

These questions give students a chance to articulate what is making sense to them and where they might need more support. Prompts can also be longer and more detailed, with additional signpost questions guiding students during and after the session. See Appendix C: Day 1 Student Handout for an example of a more expansive handout. Doing formative assessment along the way allows librarians to intervene in student confusion at point of need and helps get a sense of how students are feeling that can be difficult to gauge otherwise in a large class.

End-of-semester **questionnaires** can gather useful information on how students responded to the project. Some questions we have used include:

> The online exhibit project deepened my engagement with, and understanding of, [topic of class/exhibit]. (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
>
> One piece of advice I would give to future students working on exhibits like these would be ___________.
>
> One thing I would like the librarians who assisted with this project to know is __________.

We ask questions using numerical scales. For example, after the winter 2017 Jane Austen course, 87 percent of students selected a 4 or 5 in response to the statement "the online exhibit project deepened my engagement with, and understanding of, Austen's works," and 94 percent selected a 4 or 5 in response to the statement "the online exhibit project deepened my engagement with, and understanding of, Austen's historical context."

Reflective writing allows students to examine their thinking process throughout the project and how their work fits into the larger whole of the exhibit. Students can be assigned short reflection papers discussing their process and explaining what they chose to emphasize in their label and, if relevant, how they worked with their partner. Students can also write a section overview expressing their understanding of how their item fits into the larger fabric of the exhibit, which offers both an additional opportunity to contextualize their item and a way to build a sense of collective ownership within each exhibit theme.

Exhibit projects require choices and tradeoffs about where to direct time and energy during library instruction sessions, even when one has the luxury of four full sessions. Trends in the **exhibit labels** can tell us where students could have used more support, as well as which aspects of our teaching were most successful. Did students achieve a solid grasp of how to identify appropriate secondary sources? Were they able to effectively interpret and integrate that information with their analysis of the primary source(s)? Is the prose clear and understandable? Reflecting on the exhibit labels as a whole can offer insight into these questions.

Challenges

Like any project-based engagement with a course, student-curated exhibits—especially with large classes—require more planning time and teaching time than one-shot instruction sessions. Even within a large, well-resourced library with an existing platform for online exhibits, these projects are a major commitment of staff time. And, as anyone who has curated exhibits knows, even a simple exhibit is an immense amount of work. At the University of Michigan Library, a team of three to five library staff typically support student-curated exhibits directly, alongside less intensive involvement from staff supporting digitization and reading room use of materials. As the core team has grown more experienced with these projects, we have found our efficiency increasing, with less time necessary in the planning stages of each exhibit. However, the teaching time and exhibit coordination time remain consistent.

- A related challenge is finding the right balance in the assignment. How much input will the class have on exhibit themes? How much choice will they have in selecting materials to include? Exhibit projects become more complex as students have more autonomy over themes and materials. Ultimately, the larger the number of students, the harder it is to manage that complexity. At the same time, students should be empowered rather than limited by the assignment. We typically look to provide choice where it has the greatest impact, namely item selection, and keep other aspects of the assignment more strictly defined to streamline the project.

- While we have found increasing the number of students who can participate in building exhibits with special collections to be rewarding, the sheer number of students in the class is a challenge both because of the volume of material needed for the class and the time-consuming logistics of breaking them into small enough groups for instruction sessions. As we create more exhibits, we also attract more interest and requests for similar projects. While the volume has so far remained manageable, additional requests could exceed capacity, necessitating alternative methods of achieving similar kinds of engagement and consideration of which courses to prioritize. Courses for which an online exhibit is not the ideal method of meeting the instructor's interest in public scholarship will need to be steered into other types of work like class blogs, video essays, or other multimedia projects.

- For an institution with fewer staff or other resource limitations, these projects will require adjustments from what we describe here. At an institution without digitization workflows, equipment, and staff, it might be necessary to use photographs of materials taken by students, to only use materials that can be scanned on a flatbed scanner, or to base the exhibit on an existing digital collection. An institution with very limited reading room hours or a physically small reading room might have difficulty providing students with access to exhibit materials outside of class. In that scenario, it would be important to provide students with enough in-class time to physically engage with materials without the need for individual consultation at other times. Making adjustments to accord with institutional resources and pedagogical goals is key to making student-created exhibits a success.

Conclusion

Up close and in-depth engagement with historical documents is most often the central focus of special collections instruction. Perhaps too often librarians assume this engagement can only happen with small classes. However, our experience in building student-curated exhibits with classes of 25 to 80 students has demonstrated that it is possible to facilitate meaningful engagement at scale. Feedback from instructors has reinforced our sense that these larger-scale exhibits provide valuable experiences for students.

Dr. Lisa Makman, the course instructor for both Seven Fantasy Classics and A Menagerie of Animal Tales, described students' responses as "exuberant," as they "learned about history in an entirely new way and felt they discovered new ways to view objects—including books—as historical artifacts." Professor Adela Pinch, course instructor for Jane Austen 1817–2017: A Bicentennial Exhibit, described seeing "the lightbulbs going off in the students' heads as they learned to think about how to interpret the visual form of a printed book for information about publication, audience, use, and how to bring the knowledge they already had to their interpretations." The opportunity to contribute to a publicly available end product provided extra meaning to students' experience. One student who contributed to the Austen exhibit wrote, "It was so so fun and knowing my work and research went into this awesome online exhibition that anyone can see and that is an official university project is SO cool and rewarding."

Although they may be daunting to contemplate, student-curated exhibits are feasible with large classes, if you communicate early and often with stakeholders, find ways to size and scaffold instruction, and approach formal and informal feedback as assessment to support iterative improvement to the process. And while the logistics and effort involved are great, so are the rewards. In Professor Pinch's words: "this project demonstrated to students the value of the public humanities—it made them feel that they could produce knowledge that was of interest to the public. In this era of pressure on the humanities, and on declining enrollments in humanities classes, I think that a project that allows students to participate in forging the links between the rare materials at the university and the interests of the reading public is priceless."

APPENDIX A. Writing Exhibit Labels Handout

Writing Exhibit Labels

Know the main idea of your label.

What do you want visitors to take away from reading your label? Only include information that relates to this idea.

Start with the object.

The best labels bring the visitor's attention back to the objects on display. What will visitors notice about your book? What questions might they have? Use the object's physical qualities to explore or reinforce your main idea.

Do background research and ask questions about your book.

What's interesting or unique about your book? Who created it? For what audience? Who used or read it? What impact did it have? What background information does someone need to understand the object? Remember that there are several books on each topic, so try to focus on what makes your specific book notable.

Think about your audience.

What do or don't they already know about this topic? How much background do you need to give for them to understand your point? What vocabulary is appropriate to use?

Keep it short.

Remember that your item is part of a larger exhibit, not a standalone essay. Visitors will have a lot of labels to read. Your assignment requires you to write a maximum of 250 words, with some of that text devoted to visual description for site visitors who cannot see the images.

Remember accessibility.

Not all users of our online exhibits can see the images. What information do they need to know that is conveyed in your image? For example, you may need to describe an illustration or provide a brief quotation. Your description does not need to include irrelevant or obvious details, such as "the flowers are green" or "there are page numbers in the corners" or "this book has words printed on paper." Focus on the aspects of the page spread you've selected you want to cue people to look at or read, and then describe those aspects in approximately 50 words.

Revise your label text.

Does everything in your label text support the main idea?

Do you have any really long sentences?

Is there any vocabulary that needs to be defined or restated for visitors to understand?

Do you need to break up a paragraph into multiple paragraphs or a bulleted list?

Are all the facts you include (dates, names, etc.) relevant and correct?

Could someone who isn't part of your class understand everything in your label?

Below are labels from past exhibits by curators and librarians in the Special Collections Research Center. What do you like about these labels? How could they be improved? Keeping in mind that you cannot see the books they refer to, is any information missing to help you understand what was displayed?

From an exhibit on Jane Austen's novels and their cultural context:

> William Hayley (1745–1820). A Philosophical, Historical, and Moral Essay on Old Maids. By a Friend to the Sisterhood … London, Printed for T. Cadell, 1786.
>
> The poet and biographer William Hayley first published this essay on old maids anonymously in 1785. Reprinted multiple times in the early years after publication, the work was widely read and excerpted in periodicals. Hayley's stated intention to defend old maids against critiques of their character and lack of sympathy for their situation underscores the prevailing hostility toward unmarried women in this period. While Hayley professes an earnest interest in the welfare of old maids, critic Devoney Looser argues that readers have long had difficulty determining whether this book is satirical or serious in tone.
>
> Old maidenhood in this text is clearly laid out in class-based terms as a fall from comfortable middle-class life to a struggling existence. Hayley generalizes the condition of women who reach old maidenhood in the following way: "after having passed the sprightly years of youth in the comfortable mansion of an opulent father, she is reduced to the shelter of some contracted lodging in a country town, attended by a single female servant, and with difficulty living on the interest of two or three thousand pounds, reluctantly, and perhaps irregularly, paid to her by an avaricious or extravagant brother." Regardless of the facts of any

individual unmarried woman's situation, Hayley's essay, and Austen's portrayal of single women like Jane Fairfax and Charlotte Lucas, point to the vulnerability of those who lacked independent means and had few options for earning a living.

From an exhibit showcasing diary and journal writing from across varied collecting areas:

Candy Darling. *Candy Darling.* New York: Hanuman Books, 1992.

Candy Darling was an actress in independent films and theatrical productions. She is best known as one of Andy Warhol's superstars, with roles in his films *Flesh* (1968) and *Women in Revolt* (1971). Taken from journals kept between 1970 and 1972, the heyday of her acting career, the contents of this volume are fragmentary and varied: unsent letters, jotted-down notes, and short diary entries. Some of the writings collect information Darling wanted to keep handy like names, addresses, or even a recipe for a tropical turkey salad; others are candid explorations of the challenges of being a transgender woman in the early 1970s. Darling was clearly aware of multiple types of value for these writings besides their immediate utility, writing an unsent letter urging a friend to keep her letters both for their financial value and to help Darling write her memoirs someday.

The volume was published by Hanuman Books, a small press founded in 1986 that printed almost all of their books in this particular 3"× 4" size, intending the books to be easy to carry around and consider throughout the day. Darling's inclusion nearly 20 years after her death in a roster of avant-garde poets, musicians, artists, and other creative people makes her lasting influence apparent.

APPENDIX B. Peer Review Worksheet

Your name:

Label you're responding to:

1. Read the label out loud. Are there any parts that you found difficult to read aloud? If so, underline them on your copy of the label text.

2. What is the main idea of this label?

3. Does all of the information in this label support the main idea?

4. How does the information in the label point to the specific book on display (vs. any book on that topic or about that person)?

5. Were any elements of this label confusing or unclear? If so, which parts?

6. Are there any vocabulary terms, people, events, etc. that might need further clarification or context for a general audience?

7. Read the visual description. Can you connect what is discussed in the label to what is described in the description?

8. After reading this label, what questions do you have? Is there anything you still want to know more about?

APPENDIX C. Day 1 Student Handout

The History of the Book and Choosing Books for Your Assignment

Today you are going to learn some basic information about the history of book publishing with an emphasis on the children's book industry. You will also have an opportunity to browse potential books that could be included in your digital exhibit in order to select the one that you will use for your assignment.

Notes (Optional)

This is a space for you to take notes on information that Juli McLoone will present on the history of book publishing. There may be components of book publishing history that could be incorporated into your assignment. In addition, if you hear something that interests you, you might want to highlight it here in order to look for books with this characteristic when browsing potential books later in class.

Book Exploration/Rotations

Rotation 1

Which book(s) on this table would you be interested in working with this semester? What is the Book Number for this book? Why do you want to work with this book? Consider also taking a picture of the book cover to remind you of the book later.

If you work with this book, what do you need to know in order to complete your assignment successfully? What else do you need to know in order to write a good label?

Rotation 2

Which book(s) on this table would you be interested in working with this semester? What is the Book Number for this book? Why do you want to work with this book? Consider also taking a picture of the book cover to remind you of the book later.

If you work with this book, what do you need to know in order to complete your assignment successfully? What else do you need to know in order to write a good label?

Rotation 3

Which book(s) on this table would you be interested in working with this semester? What is the Book Number for this book? Why do you want to work with this book? Consider also taking a picture of the book cover to remind you of the book later.

If you work with this book, what do you need to know in order to complete your assignment successfully? What else do you need to know in order to write a good label?

Preparing for Next Time

What I Know (Consider What You Know from Class and/or Your Book Rotation Experience)	What I Learned (Review Your Book Publishing Notes and/or Other Info from Your Class)	What I Need to Learn (Review Your Book Rotation Questions—This Will Help Focus Your Research Next Time We Meet)
Example I know that I want to work with a book by Charles Perrault	Example The time period in which a book is published will influence many factors of the book including the illustrations	Example Who was Charles Perrault? How did the era in which he created books influence his work and this text specifically?

Lynne M. Thomas

Special Collections on a Shoestring: A Survey of Non-ARL Libraries Servicing Rare Book Collections

This article reports the first national survey that creates a baseline for documenting the experience of working with rare books in libraries without Association of Research Libraries (ARL) membership: a group of libraries that make up about half the field of librarians working with rare books. Scarcely studied despite decades of comparable studies of their ARL library colleagues, librarians working in non-ARL rare book collections have comparable demographics, professional training, and standards for their work as their peers in ARL libraries. Their experiences doing the work in non-ARL libraries demonstrate a significant disparity in resources for acquisitions, security, staffing, and fundraising. These experiences of half of the special collections professionals in the field require further study, reintroducing their narratives into our understanding of "what rare books librarianship looks like."

The establishment of rare book "treasure" rooms in the 1930s across the United States led to public impressions about rare books librarianship that we are fancy, well-funded, elegant, and our jobs are effortless—at least based upon dozens of conversations during the past 20 years with folks who learn what I do for a living. Nearly a century later, more and more of our work to maintain and steward these "fancy" collections as robust, vibrant, inclusive rare books and special collections has become much more visible to our patrons, our funders, our institutions, and our colleagues. Like many librarians who completed an MLIS program in an Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institution, I was assigned to read Dan Traister's article "The Rare Books Librarian's Day" as an introduction to the experience of being a rare books librarian.[1] After training at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, an ARL library, I began my career as a Rare Books Catalog Librarian at Yale University, also an ARL member library. In 2004

1. Daniel Traister, "The Rare Book Librarian's Day," *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 1, no. 2 (1986): 93–105, https://doi.org/10.5860/rbml.1.2.8.

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I accepted a tenure-track position as a Rare Books Librarian at Northern Illinois University, which is not an ARL member library. I spent more than half my career there, nearly 14 years, until accepting a position back at the University of Illinois in 2017. My experiences as a rare books librarian at a non-ARL library had some significant departures from expectations gained from the professional narrative of my ARL-based training and participation in the Rare Books & Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association. This survey report explores some of the differences between the work settings typical to ARL library experience, and the realities faced by many librarians who work in institutions that do not meet ARL membership standards.

One of the biggest experiential differences for me in a non-ARL library was learning to begin any given project with the default assumption of a lack of cash resources. Paying for supplies, equipment, professional travel, student help, and so on was a continuous struggle. My institution did not have gift funds to make up for institutional budget cuts. For example: finding sufficient funding to purchase two $150 dehumidifiers for collection spaces that did not already have dedicated HVAC systems was a challenge. Preservation and archival processing supplies (such as pamphlet binders, archival boxes, folders, and envelopes) did not initially have a dedicated budget line in my unit; after several substantial project-based requests based on surveying initial needs for a collection that was roughly 75 percent acidic paper, I was able to establish a modest (and therefore predictable) annual preservation supply fund. In contrast, my current ARL institution has several endowments designated to specifically support preservation, as well as multiple actual professional conservators and preservation librarians on staff. As I adjusted and adapted, I tried to share my solutions with my colleagues in my state consortia through my work on its Preservation Committee, where we created workshops with titles like "Special Collections on a Shoestring: Preservation Without a Budget" (from which this article's title is drawn). Without a travel budget, or sufficient personal finances to self-fund professional travel, I only attended the RBMS conferences about four times over my entire tenure at NIU, mostly based on driving proximity to the conference site. Funding or no, my tenure and promotion expectations still required national service. To solve this problem, I was one of the first people in RBMS to do service virtually. I was one of the first virtual members (and co-chairs) of the Seminars Committee; I also spent eight years as an inaugural member of the RBMS social media team, running its Twitter and Facebook pages.

I guessed that I wasn't alone in this experience, and in 2016 I began trying to build a counternarrative to "what rare books librarianship looks like" that better reflected my own experiences. As an editor of *New Directions for Special Collections*, I published an essay by Melissa Griffiths about her experiences at a non-ARL library, in part because I found very little in the professional literature that addressed anything beyond using rare books as teaching exemplars for undergraduate courses.[2] RBMS membership surveys are infrequent but more inclusive of non-ARL libraries, but they are more focused on determining the professional needs of section members than the experience of working in the field.

ARL maintains an openly available list of member libraries; there is no equivalent for non-ARL libraries who work with rare books. Rare book librarian colleagues at ARL libraries are routinely surveyed about their experiences working in the field, and this is presented as a de facto baseline for "Rare Books Librarianship" in the literature. This creates a presumptive bias that small liberal arts colleges, regional nonflagship state universities, independent research libraries, and minority-serving institutions are not doing similar work or facing similar challenges. We acquire, catalog, describe, preserve, and provide access to primary materials to patrons, although our patrons may not qualify as "serious" researchers to some observers. My most common walk-in visitors at Northern Illinois University were curious community members who had never encountered rare books before; many of them would visit us after visiting the NIU Regional History Center and University Archives for genealogical or local historical research. The survey that forms the basis for this article is a result of wishing to begin to see the work of my non-ARL colleagues better reflected in our collective professional literature. In the history of our collective profession, about half of our colleagues have routinely had their efforts elided, by virtue of the kinds of institutions that they work for not being studied as inherently part of our experiences in the field.

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member libraries have a long history of survey-based studies in library literature. Surveys draw consistently upon the ARL's membership of (currently) 116 libraries in the United States and Canada to scope their studies, and ARL conducts longitudinal studies of its own membership.[3] ARL survey results describe the current state of large academic libraries and, for good or ill, provide de facto standards for the field of academic librarianship. Historically, ARL membership was extended by invitation, strongly but not exclusively driven by the ARL investment index. In 2018 the ARL membership process and criteria went through a significant revision. This updated and more inclusive process can be initiated by candidate libraries or

2. Melanie Griffin, "The Rare Book Librarian's Day, Revisited," in New *Directions for Special Collections: An Anthology of Practice*, eds. Lynne M. Thomas and Beth M. Whittaker (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2017).

3. Research Library SPEC Kits and Research Library Issues are publicly available; access to salary surveys and ARL annual statistics can be purchased by nonmembers. Association of Research Libraries, Digital Publications, https://publications.arl.org/ [accessed 11 March 2022].

by ARL. Member applications typically involve one to two candidate-funded site visits, which include looking closely at rare and unique collections as part of an institution's research support, documenting specific resource and staffing levels within a given academic library. Revised membership criteria are more holistic, emphasizing institutional support for research without defining specific resource levels. Once admitted, ARL members are "assumed to be in good standing."[4] Examples of research libraries that may not meet the requirements for ARL membership include Independent Research Libraries Association members, Oberlin Group Libraries, theological libraries, some Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), regional public university libraries, and large state land-grant universities. These libraries steward vitally important rare materials yet may be excluded from academic rare-book-library studies that accept by default the ARL membership list as its representative sample. Non-ARL libraries have not been studied as a discrete and distinct group separate from their ARL member library peers.[5] As a librarian trained in an ARL Library and Information Science program but who has spent two-thirds of my career working with rare books in non-ARL libraries, I was curious just how different my experiences were from those of my colleagues who worked in ARL libraries. This survey-based study is the first to explore how academic libraries that are not Association of Research Libraries members service their rare books collections, and particularly, how their experiences may differ from those doing the same work in ARL libraries.

Literature Review

One of the earliest advocates for assembling what is now understood as a rare-book collection was Yale professor of literature Chauncey Brewster Tinker in 1924.[6] By the 1930s, librarians were publicly discussing whether or not smaller or less well-resourced libraries should hold or build special or rare books col-

4. Association of Research Libraries, "Becoming a Member," https://www.arl.org/becoming-a-member/ [retrieved 11 February 2021]; ARL Policy B.2, "Procedures for Membership," https://www.arl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/B.2-Procedures-for-Membership.pdf [retrieved 11 February 2022][site discontinued]. "Consideration for ARL membership is based upon an institution's demonstrated commitment to and achievements in research, commitment to and investment in its library, and upon the Principles of Membership in the Association of Research Libraries." The Principles of Membership do not directly discuss resources, either. *Association of Research Libraries Principles of Membership* (Chicago, IL: Association of Research Libraries, 2018), https://www.arl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2018.04.24-PrinciplesOfMembership.pdf; personal interview with Mary Lee Kennedy, ARL Executive Director (March 7, 2022).

5. Libraries that have practitioners who are RBMS members have been included along with ARL library members in the RBMS Membership Survey (RBMS 2015 survey, RBMS 1997 membership survey).

6. Quoted in William L. Joyce, "The Evolution of the Concept of Special Collections in American Research Libraries," *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 19; William Warner Bishop, "Rare Book Rooms in Libraries," *Library Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (July 1942): 375–85.

lections at all.[7] Those arguing for such collections do so in terms of improving pedagogy, particularly in the History of the Book, fundraising, and scholarly access to locally focused materials.[8] However, the discussion of the administration, growth, and stewardship of collections in these institutions rarely appears in the literature outside of the enumerated curatorial tasks of collection development and instruction.[9] There are remarkably few studies of the overall structure, funding, and experiences working in rare books collections in non-ARL libraries beyond the one that I co-edited.[10] Every rare book library is unique, stewarding a subset of unique materials. Yet, despite extensive searching, I was not able to locate articles that talk specifically about rare books librarianship overall in non-ARL libraries. Those that focus specifically on ARL member libraries are rarely framed with the recognition that they do not represent all kinds of libraries that work with rare books. One example among many: Barbara Jones' 2004 "Hidden Collections" study convincingly laid out the significant cataloging and archival processing backlogs in ARL libraries, which arguably provided the impetus for the establishment of the CLIR Hidden Collections grant program to help address those backlogs, but Jones's study was limited to and drew from a survey of ARL member libraries only.[11] Similarly, the vast majority of the literature discussing the education and training of special collections professionals is written by, emphasizes, and assumes an audience of fellow professionals working in ARL libraries; this same ARL-centric literature is taught to library school students training to join them in ALA-accredited Library and Information Science programs across

7. Warren L. Perry, "Can the Small College Library Afford Rare Books?" *College & Research Libraries* (December 1939): 104–07.

8. William Alexander Jackson, "Rare Books in the Small Public Library," *Bay State Librarian* 48 (April 15, 1958): 5–6, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=521697512 [accessed 26 March 2021]; Jolyn Wynn and Sandra Crittenden, "Even Small Libraries Can Have Special Collections," *OLA Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 4–5, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=502926190; George P. Germek, "Starting Almost from Scratch: Developing Special Collections as a Teaching Tool in the Small Academic Library," *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 23, no. 4 (October 2016): 400–13, https://doi.org/10.1080/10691316.2015.1028606 [accessed 5 March 2020]; Barry Gray, "Cataloging the Special Collections of Allegheny College," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 49, no. 1 (January 2005): 49–56, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=502941577 [accessed 5 March 2020].

9. See Elaine M. Doak, "Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: A Tale of Special Collections in the Small Academic Library," *Acquisitions Librarian* 14, no. 27 (April 2002): 41, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=27648177 [accessed 5 March 2020], which emphasizes the differences in collection development work in such a library.

10. See Melanie Griffin, "The Rare Book Librarian's Day, Revisited," in *New Directions for Special Collections: An Anthology of Practice*, eds. Lynne M. Thomas and Beth M. Whittaker (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2017), for one "slice of life" discussion of work in a non-ARL library that serves as a recent counterpoint to Dan Traister's "The Rare Book Librarian's Day" from 1986, which describes his experiences in a similar role at an Ivy League institution.

11. Barbara M. Jones, "Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access to Unprocessed Special Collections Materials in America's Research Libraries," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, & Cultural Heritage* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 88–105, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=502937139 [accessed 17 August 2022].

the country. Alyssa Spoonts' 2008 master's thesis on this topic lays out the ARL-based emphasis for educational guidelines as well as noting that the first version of the ACRL professional competencies was initiated through an ARL task force in 2001.[12]

How, then, do we tease out the experience of working with rare books and special collections *outside* of the ARL libraries that have driven our professional conversations about the profession for decades? A 2016 survey of the Rare Book and Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association membership (RBMS), the first conducted in 18 years, included both ARL and non-ARL libraries. It served as both an inspiration for this survey and a major point of comparison.[13] Its focus was firmly on demographics of the section, determining member needs for professional development; it did not engage directly with the experiences of professionals working within their own collections, particularly in terms of financial resources, collection sizes, and staff sizes. Despite non-ARL libraries stewarding roughly half the rare book collections in the United States, their work has not been explicitly highlighted in the literature. This survey is an initial attempt to bring the experiences of working with rare books and special collections outside of ARL libraries into the spotlight of our collective profession.

Methods

Part of the initial challenge for this study was logistical. An established list of non-ARL institutions that held rare books did not yet exist, whereas anyone can access the ARL member library listing on the ARL website. In 2016–2017, I developed a crowd-sourced initial listing of 126 non-ARL libraries in the United States that held and managed rare books as part of their collections, using a webform and promoting it through social media. The list, publicly available on my website at https://lynnemthomas.com/2017/01/31/special-collections-in-non-arl-libraries-our-list-so-far-2/, served as the initial basis for contacting institutional survey recipients through the 2018–2019 academic year. I used crowd-sourcing in the hopes that it would be faster and more inclusive than personally compiling a list. I reasoned that self-selection for a listing might drive stronger response rates for the forthcoming survey. The institutional submission form requested the job title of the person charged with

12. Alyssa Spoonts, *Understanding Gaps in Special Collections Education Through a Content Analysis of Syllabi* (master's thesis, 2008), https://doi.org/10.17615/zqp5-qh26. See also Alice Schreyer et al., "Education and Training for Careers in Special Collections: A White Paper Prepared for the Association of Research Libraries Special Collections Task Force" (2004), www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/special-coll-career-trainingnov04.pdf; and Michael Garabedian, "'You've Got to Be Carefully Taught': American Special Collections Library Education and the Inculcation of Exclusivity," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 7, no. 1 (2006): 55–63, https://rbm.acrl.org/index.php/rbm/article/view/254/254 [accessed 26 March 2021].

13. Elspeth Healey and Melissa Nykanen, "Channeling Janus: Past, Present and Future in the RBMS Membership Survey," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 17, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 53–81.

stewarding the rare book collections. I later identified the current person serving in each role and emailed them directly to request survey participation, in addition to openly promoting the survey on social media and library and rare books-centric listservs. After removing non-US libraries from the responses, 135 libraries who submitted their information were contacted directly via email to invite study participation. The survey was conducted using university-supplied Qualtrics software. Survey responses were relatively robust: of 135 direct invitations, in addition to open calls that netted an additional 20 responses, 38 libraries fully completed the survey for a completion response rate of 24.5 percent. An additional 10 responders partially completed the survey, answering some but not all of the questions (no reason was given for lack of completion). Of the 48 participating libraries, 15 (31%) participated anonymously; five (11%) came through an outside referral, and the remainder of survey answers (58%) came through responses to direct email invitations. With an n of 48 responding libraries overall (28 to the direct email call and 20 to the open call), out of a known N population of 155 institutions (135 identified plus 20 through the open call), this is a reasonable initial study sample. Between 24.9 and 30.9 percent of non-ARL libraries completed some of the study; the number of answering libraries varied by question and is broken out accordingly.

Survey questions (see appendix) initially drew from the 2016 RBMS survey; they were then adapted to emphasize and illuminate initial expectations of the potentially different experiences of non-ARL libraries. This survey has a much smaller sample size than the 2016 RBMS survey as administered, since this study excludes ARL member libraries. Data analysis began in fall 2019. It was interrupted by a months-long family medical emergency followed by significant additional administrative load due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, completing in early 2021. No confidence variable was calculated because this was a self-directed survey, with a portion of incomplete survey answers.

Limitations

Survey answers included in the study were geographically limited to the United States. While I endeavored to publicize the survey to potential participants across multiple social media platforms as well as on several rare book, archive, and library-related listservs in addition to direct solicitation to libraries that had completed the non-ARL listing survey form, there was only one response from an HBCU, and no responses from tribal libraries. Organizations that only handled archival materials but not rare book collections were also excluded from the survey. The survey remained open for an entire academic year and was promoted roughly monthly on social media, with additional periodic outreach on library and rare book listservs. Directly solicited participants were sent several email reminders to complete the survey. As the survey was conducted entirely online, responses from smaller cultural heritage organizations with limited internet connectivity or greater technical challenges (such as local volunteer-run historical societies) were also less likely to be submitted due to the survey method employed. At roughly a third of the initially identified potential responding institutions, this initial study demonstrates the need for further discussion of the specific experiences of professional rare books librarianship in non-ARL libraries.

Results

Collections, Budgets, and Organizational Infrastructure

Respondents identified their library types as related to Carnegie classifications (breaking down distinctions between different types of higher education organizations based on educational programs and degrees offered) and funding models.[14] Of 44 answering libraries, the majority of organizations (36%) identified as liberal arts colleges (for example, members of the Oberlin Group of libraries).[15] Nine libraries (20%) identified as Research I libraries, and four (9%) identified as Independent research libraries. Fourteen (31%) identified as publicly funded, and 11 (25%) identified as privately funded. Four libraries (9%) identified as being religiously affiliated.

Of answering libraries, the majority (45%) reported managing collections of fewer than 25,000 volumes. Eight libraries (21%) manage more than 50,000 volumes; seven libraries (18%) manage more than 100,000 volumes; two of those seven (5%) manage more than 750,000 volumes. Reporting libraries hold in aggregate 274,000 linear feet of manuscript materials, a significant amount of potentially unique material that was excluded from the Hidden Collections study. This study did not ask about backlogs, so we don't know yet how much of these materials remain inaccessible to users.

Funds for building non-ARL collections are quite modest. The vast majority of libraries answering (78%) had less than $25,000 in annual acquisitions funds; 20 (48%) answering libraries had less than $10,000. Only three libraries (7%) had annual acquisitions funds exceeding $100,000. This survey did not ask about library acquisitions funding outside of special collections. The lowest amount spent on one-time acquisitions (typically monographs) in ARL University libraries from 2018 to 2019 was $84,156; the highest was $21.9 million, with a mean of $3 million. This is across all ARL collections and does not break out special collections separately. If special collections funding is perhaps 10 percent of ARL acquisitions monographic

14. "Carnegie Classifications | Home Page," https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/ [accessed 14 July 2022]. "The Carnegie Classification® has been the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for the past four and a half decades… This framework has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty."

15. "Oberlin Group of Libraries | A Consortium of Liberal Arts College Libraries," https://www.oberlingroup.org/ [accessed 21 July 2022].

funding overall, then the mean funding for ARL special collections would be about $300,000.[16] This is a significant difference in scale of funding for non-ARL libraries. Non-ARL Acquisitions funding sources are roughly evenly split between gifts and institutional funding, but the balance varies by institution. Of 43 answering libraries, more than half (58%) report that less than a quarter of their acquisitions funding comes from gift funds. Conversely, 35 percent report that more than three-quarters of their acquisitions funding is from gift funds. The vast majority of respondents (84%) pursue private funding opportunities either directly within their units or through a library- or organizationwide fundraising mechanism.

Collections in these libraries are relatively modern. Nineteen of the answering libraries (45%) had more than half of their collection holdings dating from after 1900. Half of the answering libraries noted that between 25 and 50 percent of their materials were from the nineteenth century. Ninety-five percent of answering libraries describe materials dating from before 1500 as making up less than a quarter of their collections, and 88 percent describe materials dating from 1600 through 1799 as less than a quarter of their collections.

Insurance values for collections roughly clustered across a range from 1 to 30 million dollars for answering libraries; however, more than half (55%) of respondents selected "no insurance valuation available," a category encompassing both those who declined to share their insurance valuations and those who may not know what they are, or what kind of insurance their institution may or may not carry for their collections. This survey did not ask whether the institution was self-insured (that is, elects to pay for losses out-of-pocket rather than engaging a third-party insurance company). At my previous position, I learned what self-insurance was when I was told that the university self-insured our collections. I was asked to routinely provide a market value for the most expensive items to the campus risk management team, but I did not know what the self-insurance amount was for our collections overall. My current university includes us (along with several campus museums) in a fine arts rider on top of its self-insurance. I routinely provide ongoing valuation for the whole collection, and I am aware that we are insured for about one third of our collection's replacement costs. I also know the cost of the annual premium for that insurance. Self-insurance may significantly affect the valuation of collections by assigning a base amount that an institution will cover that may or may not relate to the actual replacement or market value of the materials. It does not necessarily take into account that a subset of any loss of collections is likely to be unique or irreplaceable materials (examples: literary papers or manuscripts, local historical materials).

16. Anam Mian and Gary Roebuck, *ARL Statistics 2018–2019* (Chicago, IL: Association of Research Libraries, 2020), https://doi.org/10.29242/stats.2018-2019.

These collections are available to users through routinely provided public services. More than three-quarters (78%) of respondents maintain set hours in their reading room, and the remainder use appointment-based systems. Tools and mechanisms for providing services rely more on sweat equity than spending money for task-specific available technology.[17] A quarter of respondents are still using solely paper-based circulation systems. Eight percent use the Aeon circulation system; the remaining libraries use a combination of their local library management systems, spreadsheets, and other home-grown systems for managing circulation tasks within their units. At my previous institution, implementing software like Aeon was immediately dismissed as unachievable because we couldn't afford the ongoing costs.

All reporting libraries provide instruction. All but three reporting libraries perform collection development activities. All but one reporting library provides both reference and digitization services. Only two reporting libraries do not mount exhibitions or hold public events.

The majority of non-ARL libraries have security procedures, disaster plans, and fire suppression for their collections. Only 8 percent of respondents don't have standardized security procedures of some kind that might, for example, reflect the RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security & Theft or other institutional security guidelines.[18] Just less than half (41%) do not include video monitoring as part of their security protocols. Thirteen percent of respondents, however, have no access to on-site fire suppression systems for their collections, either within the unit directly or through the organization's infrastructure, and 13 percent note that they do not have a disaster plan, either for their unit or through their organization's infrastructure (such as part of a larger overall library plan).

Forty-one libraries responded to questions about cataloging and archival processing. Books and serials are cataloged solely within the unit in just under half (41%) of the responding institutions. About a third of the time, cataloging happens solely outside the unit, with the remainder of cataloging being a mix of inside and outside the unit. Archival processing is conducted exclusively within the unit an overwhelming 81 percent of the time.

17. For example, the NEH- and IMLS-funded Digital POWRR program (aimed at institutions with restricted resources) leverages free software for digital preservation tasks in lieu of subscription services through third-party providers like Preservica. Digital POWRR: Preserving digital Objects With Restricted Resources, "About POWRR," https://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/ [accessed 14 July 2022].

18. Association of College & Research Libraries, "ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections" (October 5, 2009), https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/security_theft.

FIGURE 1
What Kind of Appointment Do You Hold?
(n = 40 responding non-ARL libraries)

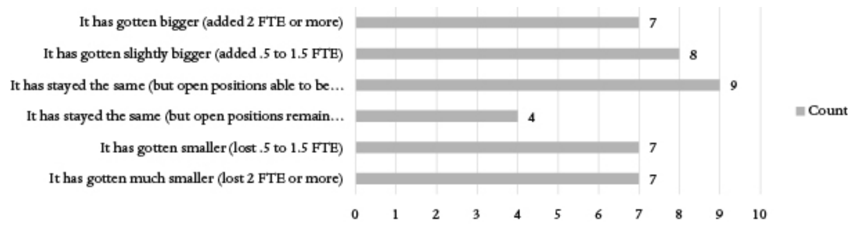
Staffing, Appointment Types, and Job Protections

Survey respondents were asked about the position types they held in their non-ARL libraries. Of 40 librarians answering, only eight (20%) held positions classified as tenure track or tenured faculty. Twenty-nine respondents (73%) held job classifications as administrative professionals or non–tenure-track faculty. Two respondents (5%) are classified as civil service employees. Thus, only a quarter of answering practitioners have significant job protections for their appointments through tenure or civil service systems. This differs slightly from the 2016 RBMS survey, which found that about a third (29%) of practitioners answering held tenure-track or tenured positions, while two-thirds (71%) of practitioners did not.

Staff in these units are small. Sixty percent of responding libraries have fewer than three professional staff in their units, while only 14 percent had professional staff exceeding five people. Eighty-six percent of responding libraries had three or fewer paraprofessional staff in their units. Fifty-eight percent reported fewer than three student workers or volunteers in their units. Staffing sizes have held steady or grown among the majority (57%) of respondents.

In non-ARL libraries, more than two-thirds (69%) of answering librarians were in positions that required a master's degree in Library or Information Science or equivalent only for their positions. Of librarians answering, career stages were roughly broken into thirds. Fourteen respondents (35%) were in their first 10 years of the profession. The remaining answers were split evenly between 10 to 15 years and 16 or more years in the profession. Thus, two-thirds of librarians in these roles are experienced professionals with more than 10 years in the field. This is in keeping with the ARL survey of library professionals, which have an average of 15.7 years of experi-

FIGURE 2
How Has the Size of Your Permanent Staff Changed in Your Unit in the Last Five Years? (n = 42)



ence among women and 15.4 years of experience among men.[19] Seventy-five percent of those answering the non-ARL survey noted that they got their jobs through a national search. Requirements for continuing appointment varied widely from "We serve at the pleasure of the Dean/President" and "There are no requirements except doing a good job and being qualified in the first place" to "Tenure: at least 5 publications in 5 years, library/university AND national service, primary effectiveness."

Demographic Information

There is a slightly higher percentage of women in non-ARL libraries and a higher percentage of people who prefer not to note their gender identity. Of respondents answering questions about race, the vast majority (87%) identified as white, 6 percent identified as Latino/Hispanic, and 6 percent preferred not to answer; this is consistent with other surveys of race across the library profession and is slightly lower than the 16.18 percent of nonwhite library professionals reported by ARL in 2018–2019.[20] The RBMS 2016 survey did not ask about sexual orientation, educational family history, or disability status; these categories were included in this survey, which indicated that nearly a third (32%) of respondents did not identify as heterosexual. Ten percent of respondents identified as disabled. The majority of respondents (72%) were not first-generation college students, reporting having at least one parent who attended college and completed a degree; 20 percent noted having parents where neither parent attended college, and 7 percent had a parent who attended college but did not complete a degree.

Discussion

Having spent more than 13 years working with rare books in a non-ARL library, I initially believed that the results of this survey would demonstrate a substantively

19. Shaneka Morris, *ARL Annual Salary Survey* 2018–2019 (Chicago, IL: Association of Research Libraries, 2019), https://doi.org/10.29242/salary.2018-2019.
20. American Library Association, "Diversity Counts," About ALA (March 29, 2007), www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts [accessed 27 May 2021]; Morris, *ARL Annual Salary Survey* 2018–2019.

different experience (both professionally and demographically) for library professionals based on the type of library they worked in. The survey posited a potentially higher preponderance of earlier-career library professionals, potentially from underrepresented communities or first-generation college students working in non-ARL libraries, but the results tell a different tale. Fundamentally, the demographics, education levels, tasks, and work experience of our colleagues in non-ARL libraries are *no different* from those of colleagues working in ARL libraries. Credentialing for working in a non-ARL library is identical to ARL libraries, even when the non-ARL library is in a minority-serving institution, an institution primarily serving first-generation students or commuters, or otherwise working toward reducing educational barriers to entry. This is a significant issue in terms of our ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the field and across higher education.

The most fundamental difference between working in ARL libraries and non-ARL libraries is the difference in *resources*. Despite no longer heavily relying on the ARL Investment Index as a metric, current ARL member libraries strategic goals and holistic membership guidelines do require a certain level of institutional investment in research support. Our field has developed a two-tier system, creating a divide between those who have ARL-level resources and those who do not, even when non-ARL libraries are still providing significant research support. In non-ARL libraries, staff are decidedly smaller for comparable collection sizes and workloads, as are acquisitions budgets. Non-ARL libraries are more likely to have "solo practitioners," colleagues whose jobs incorporate curatorial, instruction, outreach, cataloging, and archival processing work into a single role, relying more heavily on volunteers, student workers, and support staff where available. Grant funding may be more difficult to attain without partnering with another institution (particularly from within the ARL). Fundraising abilities will vary widely between small liberal arts colleges with established fundraising cultures and regional state universities that may be relatively new to large fundraising campaigns. There are slightly fewer job protections for colleagues in non-ARL libraries.

This survey did not ask about salary ranges or frequency of raises. The average pay for ARL Library Heads of Special Collections in 2018–2019 was $98,101; for professional archivists, $69,941; and for research/reference/instruction librarians, $72,125.[21] It is worth investigating how equitably non-ARL peers are paid for their work, accounting for cost-of-living differences in geography. The overall increase in tuition dependence and the systematic defunding of state-supported institutions in particular during the past 20 years is absolutely an issue across higher education. However, it becomes more acute in less well-resourced institutions, which have

21. Morris, *ARL Annual Salary Survey* 2018–2019.

decidedly fewer options when budget cuts arrive, compared to ARL institutions with long records of grants and fundraising support that may allow them to offset funding gaps either on an interim or permanent basis.

The American Library Association accredits 65 professional programs in library and information science. Forty-five percent of ALA-accredited library and information science programs are at non-ARL libraries in the United States; of those, only six have programmatic emphasis on working with rare books and special collections.[22] The professional context for generation after generation of special collections professionals is overwhelmingly that of ARL libraries and their required resource levels. New graduates come out of their ARL library programs expecting that this is just "how things are" in terms of resources available, collections sizes, staffing, and so on, but this is only true of half of the libraries in the United States that service rare books.

This survey also did not ask about professional development funding levels, which was an oversight; it is much more difficult to contribute to the professional conversation without sufficient resources to attend the major conferences in the field routinely. I looked at the list of presenters for the 2016 RBMS conference (an in-person conference I did not personally attend due to lack of funding), held in Coral Gables, Florida. Of 145 listed presenters, 80 (55%) were from ARL member libraries. Of the 65 remaining presenters from non-ARL libraries and organizations, 11—about 17%—were from institutions within the state of Florida (that is, within driving distance), which means that only 37 percent of presenters were from non-ARL libraries not within driving distance. It is difficult to create change without being *present*, particularly within the current culture of our professional organizations. Virtual participation in committee work in RBMS is a relatively new phenomenon; historically, those who showed up at conferences were the ones selected to write policies, guidelines, and standards that set expectations for the field. That practice, in turn, overlooked not only the substantive work of our non-ARL colleagues in the field, but also the collections that they steward from

22. Comparison between the listing on https://www.ala.org/cfapps/lisdir/lisdir_search.cfm and https://www.arl.org/list-of-arl-members/ conducted 05/13/2021. The following 28 non-ARL institutions have accredited programs: San Jose State University, The University of Denver, Southern Connecticut State University, The Catholic University of America, The University of South Florida, Valdosta State University, Chicago State University, **Dominican University**, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Emporia State University, **Simmons University**, St. Catherine University, The University of Southern Mississippi, East Carolina University, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, **North Carolina Central University**, **Long Island University**, **Pratt Institute**, Queen's College, CUNY, St. John's University, **Clarion University of Pennsylvania**, Drexel University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Puerto Rico, University of Rhode Island, The University of North Texas, Texas Women's University, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The six programs in bold list subprograms or pathways that emphasize special collections librarianship (working primarily with rare books as opposed to archival management or records management) on ALA's site.

our shared cultural narrative, and the students, faculty, and researchers that they serve. When the professional training and the professional organizations for a field emphasize the narratives of ARL libraries, the experiences of *an equal number of non-ARL libraries* are omitted from our cultural and professional narratives. We are telling only half of the story of institutions working with rare books across the United States.

Conclusion and Next Steps

ARL libraries have demonstrably driven the conversation about working with rare books in LIS education. This survey suggests that non-ARL libraries and their impact on the rare books field should be more consciously drawn into professional structures creating our profession and its standards. ARL is not the only reality. We need to compile and maintain a more comprehensive public institutional listing of non-ARL libraries rather than relying on those who have self-selected to include their institutions in this initial survey. Further longitudinal research is required to determine historic and current participation levels of non-ARL librarians in RBMS membership, RBMS conference attendance and presentations, and service on RBMS committees and leadership. A salary survey focusing on non-ARL librarians may be revealing in terms of pay equity. A future study of the institutional affiliations of colleagues publishing in *RBM* and other significant venues to determine how much the narrative of our profession is driven by ARL libraries is also needed. Examining work with rare books and special collections holdings at HBCUs and educational institutions that serve both Hispanic and Native American populations will highlight portions of our field long in need of illumination. Another potential future area of exploration is the impact of COVID-19 on non-ARL institutions in particular.

What might our field's expectations and guidelines look like if they fully reflected the significant variations in organizational funding, staffing, and other resources that exist at about half the rare book collections in the country?

APPENDIX. Survey Questions

Rare Books in Non-ARL libraries

You are invited to participate in a research study on the experience of working with rare books in libraries that do not participate in the Association for Research Libraries (ARL). This study is conducted by Lynne M. Thomas, Head of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. This study will take less than 30 minutes of your time. You will be asked to complete an online survey about collection size, staffing, resources, job classifications, and demographic information. Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to terminate your participation at any time without penalty. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. If you do not wish to complete this survey, just close your browser. Although your participation in this research may not benefit you personally, it will help us understand how the experience of rare book librarianship varies based upon the type of institution that houses the materials. There are no risks to individuals participating in this survey beyond those that exist in daily life. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your current status or future relations with the University of Illinois.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential? We will use all reasonable efforts to keep your personal information confidential, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. But, when required by law or university policy, identifying information may be seen or copied by: The Institutional Review Board that approves research studies; The Office for Protection of Research Subjects and other university departments that oversee human subjects research; university and state auditors responsible for oversight of research; and federal regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services.

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Lynne M. Thomas (lmt@illinois.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 217-333-2670 or via email at irb@illinois.edu. Please print a copy of this consent form for your records, if you so desire. I have read and understand the above consent form, I certify that I am 18 years old or older, and, by clicking the "Submit" button to enter the survey, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "Exit Survey" button.

- Submit (1)
- Exit Survey (2)

Q1 What kind of institution do you work at? (check all that apply)

- Community college
- Small liberal arts college
- Historically Black College/University
- Research II (mostly undergraduate, some master's programs)
- Research I (undergraduate, master's programs, doctoral programs)
- Independent/standalone organization/library not attached to an educational institution
- Public (state-funded/state-supported) institution
- Public (federally funded) institution
- Privately funded institution
- Religiously affiliated institution

Q2 What is the size of the staff working within the unit primarily concerned with servicing rare books? (Place the slider between numbers for half-time positions, etc.)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20						

- Professional staff (librarians, archivists, etc.) FTE
- Paraprofessional/support staff FTE
- Students/volunteers FTE

Q4 Has the size of the permanent staff changed in your unit in the past five years?

- It has gotten much smaller (lost 2 FTE or more)
- It has gotten smaller (lost .5 to 1.5 FTE)
- It has stayed the same (but open positions remain unfilled)
- It has stayed the same (but open positions able to be filled)
- It has gotten slightly bigger (added .5 to 1.5 FTE)
- It has gotten bigger (added 2 FTE or more)

Q3 How are the typical job tasks related to rare books librarianship handled within your organization?

	Happens within unit	Happens outside unit	Both inside and outside unit	Not applicable
Acquisitions				
Archival/manuscript processing				
Cataloging				
Class visits/instruction				
Collection development				
Digitization/digital projects				
Exhibitions				
Fundraising				
Public events				
Preservation/conservation				
Reference				
Security				

Display This Question:
If Fundraising = [Both inside and outside unit]
Or = Fundraising [Happens within unit]
Or = Fundraising [Happens outside unit]

Q16 How does your unit dedicate staff time to fundraising? (select all that apply)

- Friends of the library group sited in unit; only for unit
- Friends of the library group sited in unit; librarywide emphasis
- Professional fundraising staff in unit
- Professional fundraising staff in library works with unit

Q5 What is the size of the book collection that your unit manages?

- 24,999 or fewer volumes
- 25,000 to 49,999 volumes
- 50,000 to 74,999 volumes
- 75,000 to 99,999 volumes
- 100,000 to 249,999 volumes
- 250,000 to 499,999 volumes
- 500,000 to 749,999 volumes
- 750,000 or more volumes

Q6 What is the size of the archival/manuscript collection that your unit manages (linear feet, in thousands)?

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40
45 50

Q7 By percentage, from what time periods are your collections drawn? (must add up to 100%)

- Pre-1600
- 1600–1799
- 1800–1900
- 1901–present
- Total

Q8 What is your total, typical annual unit budget (from any source) for acquisitions? (select one)

- $10,000 or less
- $10,001–$24,999
- $25,000–$49,999
- $50,000–$74,999
- $75,000–$99,999
- $100,000–$124,999
- $125,000–$149,999
- $150,000–$174,999
- $175,000–$199,999
- $200,000 or more

Q10 By percentage, how are your acquisitions funding sources divided? (your total must add up to 100%)

- Institutional/central funds
- Gift funds
- Grant funds
- Total

Q11 What is your annual unit budget (in thousands of dollars) for staffing?

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800
900 1,000

Q12 By percentage, from where do you draw your staffing funding sources? (must add up to 100%)

- Institutional/central funds: ________
- Gift funds: ________
- Grant funds: ________
- Total: _________

Q13 What is the insurance value of the collections managed in your unit? (select one)

- No insurance valuation available
- Less than $1 million
- $1 million to $9.99 million
- $10 million to $29.9 million
- $30 million to $49.9 million
- $50 million to $69.9 million
- $70 to $99.9 million
- $100 million or more

Q14 How does your unit manage collection circulation tasks? (choose any that apply)

- Paper-based system
- Library management system (Alma, Voyager, etc.)
- Special collections management system (Aeon, etc.)
- Some other system (please describe)

If = Some Other System, Display This Question:

Q30 Please tell us about your circulation system.

Q15 Does your unit have… (select all that apply, per line)

	In the unit	In the organization	Don't have
A disaster plan			
Fire suppression system			
Dedicated security staff			
Standardized security procedures			
Video monitoring			

Q15 Does your unit maintain a reading room/user space for accessing your collections that is open to the public?

- Yes, routinely/on a set schedule
- Yes, only by appointment
- Affiliated users/members only; it's easy to get guest status
- Affiliated users only

The following questions will help us to better understand the demographics of professionals working in non-ARL rare books and special collections libraries.

Q17 For how long have you been a special collections professional?

- Less than 10 years
- 10–15 years
- 16 or more years

Q18 Were you a first-generation college student?

- Neither of my parents attended college
- One parent attended college but did not complete a degree
- At least one of my parents both attended college and completed a degree
- Both of my parents attended college and completed a degree

Q19 When you accepted your current position, was it through a national search?

- Yes
- No
- Don't remember/ Don't know

Q20 Is there a form of tenure or continuing appointment at your institution?

- Yes, tenure
- Yes, continuing appointment
- No, we have contracts for set periods of time longer than a year
- No, we have at-will employment only

Q21 What type of appointment do you hold?

- Faculty (tenure track/tenured)
- Faculty (non–tenure-track)
- Administrative/professional
- Civil service
- Other

Q22 Are there minimum institutional educational requirements for tenure or continuing appointment?

- Yes, professional master's degree only (Library/Information Science, Museum Studies, etc.)
- Yes, subject master's degree
- Yes, professional master's degree and subject master's degree
- Yes, PhD
- Yes, PhD and professional master's degree
- No requirements beyond bachelor's level
- Other (please indicate)

If Are there minimum institutional educational requirements for tenure or continuing appointment? = Other (please indicate)

Q33 Please elaborate on the requirements for continuing appointment at your institution.

Q26 Would you consider a career move now?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Skip To: Q27 If Would you consider a career move now? = No

Display This Question:

Q27 If No, why? (select all that apply)

- Happy where I am
- Family reasons
- Not financially feasible
- Lack of appropriate opportunities
- Other (please specify if you wish)

If No, why? (select all that apply) = Other (please specify if you wish)

Q29 Other reasons not to make a career move include…

Q24 What is your racial and ethnic identification (as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (not Hispanic or Latino)
- Asian (not Hispanic or Latino)
- Black or African American (not Hispanic or Latino)
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino)
- White (not Hispanic or Latino)
- two or more races (not Hispanic or Latino)
- other (please specify)
- prefer not to answer

If What is your racial and ethnic identification (as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Com… = other (please specify)

Q32 Feel free to use this space to further describe your racial and ethnic identification.

____

Q23 What is your gender identification? (Select all that apply)

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary/Gender Nonconforming
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer

Q28 What is your sexual orientation or identity (select all that apply)?

- Asexual and/or Aromantic (1)
- Bisexual and/or Pansexual (2)
- Gay (3)
- Heterosexual (4)
- Lesbian (5)
- Queer (6)
- Prefer not to answer (7)

Q25 Do you identify as disabled, as a person with disabilities, or as someone living with a chronic condition?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Book Reviews

RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage reviews books, reports, new periodicals, databases, websites, blogs, and other electronic resources, as well as exhibition, book, and auction catalogs pertaining directly and indirectly to the fields of rare book librarianship, manuscripts curatorship, archives management, and special collections administration. Publishers, librarians, and archivists are asked to send appropriate publications for review or notice to the Reviews Editor.

It may not be possible for all books received to be reviewed in *RBM*, but the reviews appearing in the print journal are supplemented by a larger number of reviews published digitally on the RBM digital platform at https://rbm.acrl.org/index.php/rbm/pages/view/reviews. Books or publication announcements should be sent to the Reviews Editor: John Henry Adams, j.adams@missouri.edu, Research and Instruction Librarian, University of Missouri, Columbia MO, 65201.

On the Road Again: Developing and Managing Traveling Exhibitions. 2nd ed. Rebecca A. Buck, Jean A. Gilmore, and Irene Taurins, eds. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020. Paperback, 105p. $35.00 (ISBN: 978-1-5381-3077-3).

On the Road Again: Developing and Managing Traveling Exhibitions, 2nd edition, provides a useful and practical introduction to planning, preparing, and successfully circulating a traveling exhibition. The title is directed especially to small and mid-sized museums, but its content may also benefit special collections, archives, and other cultural heritage practitioners interested in the topic. In addition to outlining and describing the considerations and work integral to mounting a traveling exhibition, editors Rebecca A. Buck, Jean A. Gilmore, and Irene Taurins provide sample forms, from checklists to contracts, for each step of the process. This updated edition accounts for some developments in digital technologies as well as updated laws and regulations relevant to lending cultural objects. For this second edition of the widely used 2003 text, Taurins, Director of Registration at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, joins Gilmore and Buck, who both retired from long careers as museum registrars in 2013.

The book's structure follows the lifecycle of a traveling exhibition, from concept and exhibit creation, to preparation for the exhibition tour, to upkeep, and, finally, dispersal. If exhibitions require planning, a timeline, and a large cast of contributors to be successful, those that travel require these features to an even greater degree. In contrast to noncirculating exhibitions, traveling shows must pay for themselves, or for travel expenses and direct costs of circulation at a minimum. Buck, Gilmore, and Taurins address conceptualizing and creating an exhibition together as these processes inform one another. They point to the need to market a mobile show at least two years in advance, partly to ensure its economic feasibility, but realize that some creation must occur to make marketing possible. They also emphasize that objects must be selected, exhibition details compiled, and budgets drawn up at a very early stage, but acknowledge that some iterative planning will be necessary. Some elements of exhibition creation discussed in this manual will be familiar to those who have mounted noncirculating exhibitions. Other considerations are unique to traveling shows, and the editors' efforts to highlight them are helpful. For example, calculating an exhibition fee is a key part of conceptualizing and creating a traveling show, as it is this fee that will cover exhibition expenses. Full booking is also desirable, so that an exhibition does not need to be dismantled and stored during the tour. Crates and packing are the largest travel expense, meaning that objects really must be selected early in the process for accurate budgeting. Furthermore, an organization's main insurance policy may not be sufficient to cover a traveling exhibition. These points are key for those readers embarking on a traveling exhibition for the first time.

The editors consistently highlight the need to carefully manage details throughout the exhibition lifecycle. In contrast to a noncirculating exhibition, a traveling show requires the secure transportation of items and careful handling and display by many different individuals in many different environments. This creates a need for internal checklists and, in the authors' recommendation, for a database that documents objects, couriers, lenders, crates, and shipments. Shared documentation, namely a contract drafted by the organization circulating an exhibition, is also necessary and important. This document governs the relationship between lenders and exhibitors and establishes the terms of a loan. Buck, Gilmore, and Taurins dedicate a short chapter to contracts and contract negotiations, as these can vary from simple and unspecific to highly detailed and are key to ensuring the success of a show. The editors make useful recommendations toward a "standard" contract, thus helping to simplify a complex and tedious element of touring shows. They also provide a sample incoming loan agreement and a sample receipt.

Once objects are selected and the feasibility of a traveling exhibition is confirmed, preparations for the tour begin. Crate making, packing, and transportation are important logistical considerations. The exhibition creator must compile exact specifications, seek out a crate maker, arrange for delivery of crates, number and label them, create packing instructions, and develop a master list with crate number and objects contained. Similar steps are required for securing a shipper and ensuring that items arrive at their destinations in a timely manner and in good condition.

Couriers play an important role in the transportation of exhibition objects as well as their upkeep, and the editors address booking a courier and making travel arrangements. Exhibition labels, installation details, and condition reports must also accompany the objects. The editors advocate including diagrams, photographs, and highly specific instructions to facilitate all elements of the process. The need for planning and precision is a theme that threads through this concise yet thorough guide.

Useful sample forms included throughout the text and in appendices at the end of the book can be readily adapted by those arranging a traveling show for the first time. And while the forms are intended for those involved with traveling exhibitions, some might also be adapted by institutions for other needs. The "Generic RFP for Shipping" in appendix A, for example, might be used to solicit estimates for shipping and crating acquisitions or donations. The "Sample Incoming Loan Agreement" in appendix E might be used to document loan arrangements between different repositories on a common university campus, such as a special collections and a campus art museum. Similarly, the text's recommendations regarding the makeup of exhibition committees and suggestions for exhibition checklists can apply to nontouring shows and may benefit institutions or practitioners that are new to, or interested in growing, exhibition programs.

Short texts on indemnity, insurance coverage related to acts of terrorism, and digital condition reporting by various authors complement the main text and the appendices in this second edition of the book. These are indeed useful updates. Additional discussion of how digital technologies, digital collections, and digital exhibiting have altered the landscape of traveling exhibitions would be welcome. The book's final chapter, "Traveling Exhibition Theory in Practice," briefly documents some of the challenges and lessons learned in the planning of a traveling exhibition of wall-mounted sculptures by Michael Sherrill. This is a tangible example of some of the factors and considerations that are otherwise presented in the abstract in this work. Additional and expanded case studies of this sort would serve to further illustrate possible distress points in traveling exhibit preparation and execution while also filling out and strengthening this chapter. An updated bibliography concludes a text that remains a key resource to the planning and execution of traveling exhibitions, by novices and the more experienced alike.—*Erika Hosselkus, University of Notre Dame*

Reading Mathematics in Early Modern Europe: Studies in the Production, Collection, and Use of Mathematical Books. Philip Beeley, Yelda Nasifoglu, and Benjamin Wardaugh, eds. New York, NY: Routledge, 2021. Hardcover, 348p. $160 (ISBN 978-0-367-60925-2). Ebook, 348p. $44.05 (ISBN 978-1-003-10255-7).

Mathematics in print was not a good business proposition, at least not for printers in London in the seventeenth century. In his chapter, "'A Design Inchoate': Edward Bernard's Planned Edition of Euclid and Its Scholarly Afterlife in Late Seventeenth-Century Oxford," Philip Beeley details the winding path of a proposed edition of Euclid's *Elements*, showing just how many hands, how many years, and how much convincing it took for a project of clear academic importance to be realized in a final, printed form. Beeley, along with Benjamin Wardaugh and Yelda Nasifoglu, is one of the editors of *Reading Mathematics in Early Modern Europe: Studies in the Production, Collection, and Use of Mathematical Books*, an engrossing new book published last year by Routledge. The editors write, "By defining and illuminating the distinctive world of early modern mathematical reading, this volume seeks to close the gap between the history of mathematics as a history of texts and history of mathematics as part of the broader history of human culture" (i)—an ambitious academic project, and one that is realized quite successfully here. Each of the 11 chapters in the book is an essay that supports that argument from a different angle. Some focus on the history of specific mathematical concepts and on their textual transmission, and evolution, over time. Others zoom in on historic figures in the field and the textual artifacts they left behind. All of the chapters engage with the transmission of mathematics at the material level in some way and are grounded in the analysis of early modern texts, diagrams, and the material evidence of readers' interactions with them.

Vincenzo De Risi's chapter, "Did Euclid Prove *Elements* I, 1? The Early Modern Debate on Intersections and Continuity," traces the study of the proof of Euclid's *Elements* I, 1 in print, which changed over time as, among other things, early modern readers' understanding of the mathematical concept of continuity and the role of diagrams in the study of geometry changed. Robert Goulding's "Numbers and Paths: Henry Savile's Manuscript Treatises on the Euclidean Theory of Proportion" considers the problem of understanding ratios and proportion in the sixteenth century through Savile's notes in his own copy of Euclid's *Elements*. Goulding also writes extensively about Savile's letters to his contemporary, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, using these pieces of textual evidence to trace how Savile grappled with the ancient Greek understanding of ratio and was able to arrive at, and to articulate, a new understanding of the concept for early modern mathematicians. Richard Oosterhoff's "Tutor, Antiquarian, and Almost a Practitioner: Brian Twyne's Readings of Mathematics" provides the reader with a deep dive into the notebooks of Brian Twyne, Oxford's first Keeper of the Archives, who was also a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, an avid historian of Oxford itself, and an amateur mathematician. Oosterhoff focuses on two subsets of those notebooks: teaching materials, which Twyne labeled "schediasticorum libri," and which retain their original form; and manuscript materials of a wider variety (letters, reading notes, excerpts from contemporary writers) that were rebound much later (152). Through all of the book's 11 chapters, the common thread of a close examination of a wide variety of archival sources helps to weave together a strong argument for "the history of mathematics as a history of texts," but also as a history of all of the human activities around the creation of and engagement with those texts (i).

While each essay takes a different path to arrive at the book's central ideas, there are many interesting points of intersection from chapter to chapter. Euclid's *Elements*—its translations and mistranslations, its diagrams surviving from ancient sources and reworked by early modern ones, editions planned but never realized—is ever-present. After Euclid, Henry Savile is another figure whose historic hand helps tie several chapters together. Yelda Nasifoglu's fascinating chapter, "Reading by Drawing: The Changing Nature of Mathematical Diagrams in Seventeenth-Century England," brings the reader back to Henry Savile, an important sixteenth-century mathematician first introduced in this book by Robert Goulding. Nasifoglu returns to Savile, who endowed professorships at Oxford in geometry and astronomy, and his Savilian statutes that established the corresponding curricula for those subjects. Her examination of various teaching tools extant in the Bodleian Library's Savilian Collections—manuscripts, paper instruments, large-scale drawings, posters—helps illustrate not only how mathematics was taught, but also how it was understood in seventeenth-century England. Henry Savile and the teaching of mathematics at the university level is again discussed by Mordechai Feingold in his chapter, "Reading Mathematics in the English Collegiate-Humanist Universities." Feingold engages Robert Goulding and his chapter directly, taking issue with Goulding's assessment of the state of mathematics at Oxford upon Henry Savile's arrival. And Savile is again the central focus of William Poole's "The Origin and Development of the Savilian Library," an interesting and detailed history of the evolution of the collection first started by Henry Savile in service of the professorships in mathematics that he endowed.

The presence of early modern readers' annotations in all manner of mathematical books is another interesting point of intersection shared by several chapters. The last three chapters of the book all engage with specific copies of works that have been annotated, in some cases heavily and by multiple hands. In Boris Jardine's "Instrumental Reading: Towards a Typology of Use in Early Modern Practical Mathematics Texts," Jardine focuses on the annotations in a single copy of Leonard and Thomas Digges' *Pantometria*, printed in a second edition in 1591 and held by the University of Cambridge. This copy was annotated by at least six different hands, and Jardine seeks to establish a typology of use based on how these different readers interacted with the same text. Kevin Tracey also focuses on multiple hands in a single book, John Seller's *A Pocket Book, containing several choice collections: in Arithmetick, Astronomy, Geometry, Surveying, Dialling, Navigation, Astrology, Geography, Measuring, Gageing, etc.* Tracey's chapter, "'Several Choice Collections' in Geometry, Astronomy, and Chronology: Using and Collecting Mathematics in Early Modern England," considers the London Science Museum's copy of this work and makes some interesting observations about a work that was intended for a very different audience than many of the other publications discussed in this book.

Annotations also serve as important pieces of evidence in several chapters that focus on how early modern readers dealt with errors—of print and of logic. Returning to Boris Jardine's "Instrumental Reading," Jardine counts "corrective reading" as its own typology of use. He writes, "*Corrective* reading begins with the everyday practice of attending to errata, and in this case stretches to the extremes of correction (even of the errata list itself) that can only signal some intention beyond reading, either social, bibliographic, or commercial" (261). Benjamin Wardhaugh attempts to quantify just how common corrective reading was in his chapter, "'The Admonitions of a Good-Natured Reader': Marks of Use in Georgian Mathematical Textbooks." Wardhaugh analyzed 366 copies of popular mathematical books from eighteenth-century Britain. And while he acknowledged the limitations of his study, specifically problems of what kinds of copies survive and why, more than 80 percent of the books he examined included marks of "straightforward correction" (232). In Renée Raphael's "Interpreting Mathematical Error: Tycho's Problematic Diagram and Readers' Responses," Raphael discusses how three different contemporaries of Tycho Brahe interpreted a very different sort of error. In a printed diagram in his 1588 work *De mundi aetherei recentioribus phaenomenis liber secundus*, Tycho made several significant errors in a diagram representing a comet that prompted Galileo, Johannes Kepler, and Scipio Chiaramonti (among others) to print their own responses to the work. Here, Tycho's errors were likely not those of a printer, but of the author himself. Raphael argues that reading contemporary critical responses to Tycho's diagram, and the text that accompanied it, allows us to reconstruct how those contemporaries read and attempted to understand Tycho's work.

The central importance of annotations to many of *Reading Mathematics in Early Modern Europe's* chapters speaks to the central importance of readers in the understanding of the history of mathematics. It also speaks to the importance of the mathematical archive writ large as a rich resource, which many of the book's contributors make deep use of. As a reader of this text, I found the book to be quite readable, even to someone who is not a historian of math. As someone who works in special collections librarianship, I also found the discussion and use of collections like the Biblioteca Ambrosiana and the Bodleian Library to be quite compelling. There is a lot here for readers interested in early modern print and academic culture, as well as those who work in fields related to mathematics—astronomy and architecture in particular. And while the book seeks to take in the state of mathematical texts across early modern Europe, the scope is admittedly a little narrower than that, with a heavy focus on England and on Oxford in particular. That having been said, *Reading Mathematics* invites further study at the intersection of the histories of print and math, perhaps across a broader swath of space and time. As the book itself argues, the history of mathematics is written by readers as much as it is by those being read.—*Lena Newman, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University*

Curating Under Pressure: International Perspectives on Negotiating Conflict and Upholding Integrity. Janet Marstine and Svetlana Mintcheva, eds. New York, NY: Routledge, 2021. Ebook, xxv, 264p. $40.45 (ISBN: 978-0-8153-9621-5).

Curating Under Pressure: International Perspectives on Negotiating Conflict and Upholding Integrity examines the delicate route curators must negotiate between supporting artistic freedom of expression while managing the expectations of systems of government, stakeholders providing financial support, communities represented in the art, and the potential audience for their exhibitions. It suggests that curators must balance their autonomy with respect to the diversity of their local, regional, or national environments. Both private and public entities may force curators into a position where they must choose between prioritizing freedom of expression and artistic creativity or protecting the reputation of their institutions or safety of their colleagues.

Janet Marstine and Svetlana Mintcheva are well-established in the field of Museum Studies. Marstine's teaching, research, and professional career focus on museum ethics. She has written or served as editor for four books on ethics and museum theory and sat on the Ethics Committee of the UK's Museums Association from 2014 to 2019. Mintcheva is an academic and an activist whose research and teaching focus on censorship and free speech in the arts. She is the director of programs at the National Coalition Against Censorship and founded the Arts Advocacy Program in the organization 20 years ago. Their selection of chapters for this book illustrates a broad spectrum of situations in which each author experienced censorship or self-censorship and had to navigate a complicated set of ethical questions in their role as art curator or museum director. It includes international examples from regions including East Asia, the Middle East, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Russia, Colombia, and the United States. Together, these diverse perspectives highlight the idea that censorship exists everywhere and takes different forms depending on the national system of government and the cultural expectations surrounding art and what the public or those in power deem "appropriate" for public display.

The book, divided into two parts, contains a list of black-and-white figures incorporated into the chapters along with a list of color plates cited in the chapters but found near the front of the book. The first part, "Understanding Self-Censorship," includes six chapters and focuses on recognizing the factors that contribute to self-censorship in a variety of political and cultural contexts. Marstine opens this section by discussing "how censorship, self-censorship and freedom of expression are mutually constitutive and slippery categories" (xix), using examples of her experience navigating the political dynamics between China and Hong Kong while working with art exhibitions in both locations. The remaining chapters in Part I discuss how curators have recognized or employed different forms of self-censorship in response to institutional, government, or public pressure in the United Kingdom, Qatar, Israel, South Africa, and China. In each example, curators had to alter or eliminate specific works of art or entire exhibitions due to pieces deemed controversial by stakeholders or the surrounding community.

Part II, "Negotiating Self-Censorship," "focuses on the strategies and tactics that practitioners have developed to maintain the integrity of their curatorial vision" (xxi) while experiencing pressures to censor from external groups. Using examples from Palestine, Turkey, East Asia, Colombia, Russia, and the United States, the authors discuss successful and unsuccessful curatorial practices from their own experiences. Mintcheva closes the book by discussing what she terms "adaptive curatorial practice," which she defines as "a way of working that is always actively aware of the sociopolitical environment and the interest vectors conveying onto art institutions yet succeeds in negotiating the resulting pressures and preserving the integrity of the artist's and curator's vision" (212). She offers strategies for successfully navigating these issues by prioritizing communication with stakeholders and developing local, regional, and national communities as networks of support. These communities of museum practitioners can help each other by reviewing exhibitions for content that may face censorship and strategizing methods for communicating with stakeholders through programming and contextualizing works of art in written materials accompanying exhibits. By being open about the intentions of the exhibition from the beginning and seeking out areas of possible contention during all planning phases, curators can mitigate censorship to achieve this balance and avoid conflict.

Curating Under Pressure is unique in the study of museum ethics because of its focus on self-censorship. It argues that self-censorship exists in curatorial practices everywhere and is sometimes necessary to maintain a code of ethics. Rather than something to be avoided, knowing when to apply self-censorship is critical to the profession and a core skill that curators should possess. Its emphasis on combining theoretical and practical approaches sets it apart from other books about museum studies, as does its focus on international perspectives. It discusses approaches to avoiding legal scrutiny, protecting the security of museum workers and their spaces, and managing public outcry while maintaining curatorial integrity.

Although each chapter tells a different story about its author's experiences with self-censorship, they are weaved together so that common themes emerge around the globe. Each chapter provides a necessary amount of context about the political and cultural environment in its geographical location so someone unfamiliar with the area can understand why the art in question was viewed as controversial, why the censorship occurred, and why the resulting curatorial decisions were made. Historic and cultural context is very important in each example, so it is beneficial to the reader to help them understand the curator's point of view. The book emphasizes that pressure to censor can come from anywhere: the government, corporations, the military, right- and left-leaning activist groups, and from within museums themselves. Providing international perspectives is certainly a benefit, although the continents of South America and Africa are underrepresented, as is Australia, the only populated continent without a chapter devoted to it.

One of this book's strengths is the relevance and urgency of the issues it discusses. Its arguments are representative of current events surrounding freedom of speech and artistic expression. The influence of social media on issues of censorship also appears in several chapters. While social media can be a beneficial tool, in several examples, it serves as a means for the public to mobilize with like-minded groups and unite to protest works of art they deem unacceptable. Curators lose control of the narrative in social media due to the decontextualization of the art, often criticized by people who have never seen it and have no context for its creation. This sometimes resulted in entire programs being canceled due to public backlash. The frequent discussions of social media make the book seem more relevant to current events and curatorial practices.

In most chapters, the author provides enough context, illustrated figures, or color plates to help the reader understand the work in question and why it received scrutiny. However, there are some instances, particularly in chapters 8, 13, and 14, where the reader may need to research the artwork or artists to see a visual of the work and read about its creation and meaning to understand why it was challenged.

Additionally, the authors show a recurring bias against censorship in all forms, often favoring artistic expression above all else. Despite one of the book's main arguments being that self-censorship is sometimes necessary, and should even be embraced, often the authors seemed to describe their self-censorship begrudgingly.

This does not undermine the argument, but it does at times seem to delegitimize the viewpoint of those calling for censorship. This can read as slightly dismissive because one of the strategies for adaptive curatorial practice is to have productive engagement with potential objectors rather than becoming confrontational.

This book is part of a "Museum Meanings" book series and would be most useful for museum practitioners who curate exhibits, work with artists to acquire or showcase their work, or participate in fundraising or museum administration. Most examples focus on contemporary art, but librarians, archivists, and curators in archives and special collections will see parallels in their work, especially regarding the selection of materials for exhibits, presentations, outreach, or teaching. Anyone in a position that requires communicating with donors, administration, local communities, and the general public can find useful advice for negotiating these relationships and minimizing conflict related to controversial collections or programs.

Overall, this book challenges the outdated binary of artistic freedom versus suppression and addresses many examples of the pressures to self-censor artistic works. Under the pretense that "Entirely avoiding controversy is impossible—one can never predict what content will spark opposition" (218), it provides advice for navigating complex relationships by increasing communication with stakeholders and communities represented, creating supplemental materials to contextualize potentially controversial works, and building a community of practice to recognize and address potential calls for censorship before they can multiply through social media or attract unwanted attention. Even those without curatorial responsibilities can appreciate learning about international perspectives on art and the struggles to push the boundaries of art within the confines of what is socially, culturally, and politically acceptable.—*Alison Reynolds, Georgia Institute of Technology*

Adam Gordon. *Prophets, Publicists, and Parasites: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of the Critic*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020. Paperback, 280p. $27 (ISBN: 978-1-6253-4453-3).

Adam Gordon's *Prophets, Publicists, and Parasites: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of the Critic* examines the role of the critic and criticism in early nineteenth-century America using a wide variety of sources to show how critical forms shaped arguments. This deliberate inclusion of a range of source types allows the author to compare and study criticism with a unique perspective. As Gordon argues, the definition of literary criticism should be expansive enough to include different forms because of how criticism is inextricably linked to the forms in which it circulated. In defining these forms, he states, "By 'critical form,' I mean two intertwined and overlapping structures: the print media through which criticism circulated (monthly magazines, daily newspapers, anthology, pamphlet, etc.) and the critical genres through which it expressed itself (brief notice, lengthy review essay, tabloid literary gossip, etc.)" (6). A strong case is made that studying these different forms can also bring a new perspective to the current debates over the value of criticism.

Gordon is an associate professor of English at Whitman College, and this book is primarily based on his dissertation from UCLA, which is evident from the organization of the chapters. His arguments build upon scholars who have written about the impact of print technologies, reprinting, and criticism studies, including Caroline Levine, Leon Jackson, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Meredith McGill, Trish Loughran, Lara Langer Cohen, Michael Warner, and Jordan Stein. The book covers a period when American print culture became "an increasingly connected national market" (18) in which the availability of education and more reading material increased literacy across all strata of the American population. Readers turned to critics to navigate the literary marketplace because of the amount of available print materials and to provide explanations and context for publications. To show how nineteenth-century critics categorized and evaluated critical practice in relation to critical forms, Gordon structures the chapters around five individuals (Rufus Wilmot Griswold, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Frederick Douglass, and Edgar Allan Poe) and the critical forms of lectures/essays, anthologies, magazine reviews, newspaper criticism, and reprinted reviews.

The first chapter focuses on Emerson and the critical form of quarterly book reviews, demonstrating how he adapted his critical ideas to venues. Gordon describes how quarterly reviews promoted the Transcendentalist movement because relevant publications were coming out of places like Germany; but, in addition to the language barrier, the physical books were hard to acquire. Reviews informed people of new works and provided summaries and the significance of books. As Gordon states, "Models of critical dissemination matter, in other words, since different formats carry with them specific conventions that influence the message, content, and style of the thoughts expressed" (55). Transcendentalism and Emerson specifically show how literary criticism cannot be divorced from physical dissemination.

In comparison, Rufus Wilmot Griswold, the subject of the second chapter, created literary compilations and aimed to give a representative sampling of the national literature, which could then be used for the creation of new literary productions. As Gordon explains, this view of building upon the past contrasted sharply with Emerson, who thought American literature needed to be unburdened of the past to be original. In comparison, Griswold thought an entirely new literature was neither possible nor desirable and that progress would not occur without authors being able to survey American works comprehensively. Griswold began the task of canon formation and was the first American professional anthologist (73–74).

The third chapter turns the focus to magazine reviews and Edgar Allan Poe, who was known for severe, honest criticism that aimed at improving literature. As Gordon points out, Poe's work reflected the tension between his high standards and self-scrutiny. Gordon provides the example of Poe reviewing himself and his critical hypocrisy, in how he committed literary crimes that he accused others of doing. For Poe, the figure of the author was a deliberate construct, and an effective critical persona had to be crafted. As Gordon points out, Poe knew he needed to cultivate sensation, despite his contribution to the professionalization of criticism. One of his contradictions detailed by Gordon is that he called for serious criticism and tried to elevate American letters while also generating self-publicity and scandals.

The chapter on Margaret Fuller focuses on her work with newspaper book reviews and how she turned them into a respected medium. She was the most widely read of the book's authors, but as Gordon explains, the ephemerality of newspapers was debilitating to her critical legacy. As Gordon notes, her reviews directly show "how critical values, theories, and legacies are bound up with the print media that disseminate them" (168). Gordon asserts that the newspaper book review is a long overlooked critical genre of this era, and he asserts that Fuller's tenure as literary editor of the *Tribune* marked the origins of the newspaper book review section in America and set a new standard; it brought literary criticism to the masses, and its placement showed its importance to the everyday world of readers. The excerpted passages and translations were central to her reviews but were mostly excluded from twentieth-century collections of Fuller's writing, which we can now see demonstrates the importance of context and sources in research. Newspapers' materiality posed difficulties for Fuller's critical legacy; and, as Gordon explains, newspaper criticism continues to pose problems for scholars. They are preserved less frequently and were built for cheapness and short-term use, so they have not endured as well and require serious commitments of space and resources to maintain. In addition, they lack access points like table of contents or indexes and are often poor quality, which poses challenges for optical character recognition (OCR) technologies and makes keyword searches unreliable (209). This combination of factors for the access to and preservation of newspapers led to Fuller's reviews being much slower to receive recognition.

The last chapter looks at Frederick Douglass and the response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in pamphlet reviews, critical companion volumes, and reprinted reviews in periodicals. Despite their low critical authority, Douglass used reprinted reviews as a weapon in the war against slavery. Reviews kept Stowe's novel a current topic of controversy and prolonged its cultural impact, and this response was an example of the role that print forms played in the mobilization of literary criticism as an agent of political change. Gordon examines three sites of critical response to Stowe's novel: lengthy pamphlet reviews by Southerners, Stowe's book-length critical rebuttal, and reprinted critical responses in the Black press. Gordon shows how critics used material forms to forward their agendas and that the success of the book was bound up in its materiality. To respond to the book, Southerners turned to pamphlets, which provided more space for their arguments, had low production costs, and made it possible to circulate the reviews widely, as opposed to the limited audiences and brief temporal lifespans of periodicals. These possibilities prompted the development of a new material form in American critical history, the book-length reviews, including Stowe's own rebuttal *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

This response by Stowe consisted of facts to prove the accuracy of her book, with the authority of her evidence depending on the original publication context. This was a guiding editorial principle for Frederick Douglass, and the critical response to Stowe's novel in his paper challenges the definition of criticism, which is why it is the focus of the last chapter and is labeled "critical reprinting" by Gordon. Reprinting in this era, as Douglass did, reoriented criticism toward communal and distributed authorship instead of being individual and centralized. In response to Douglass' approach to criticism, Gordon offers two claims: first, that this era's critical culture relied on a diverse range of critical forms beyond reviews and literary notices; and, second, that Douglass wielded the power of reprinted and hybrid criticism to create a critical forum that privileged values of community debate over the authority of a single critical perspective. In summation, Gordon claims that, by looking at the critical reception to Stowe's novel in Douglass' paper, he is redirecting the gaze to focus on less stable critical forms, hybrid texts.

Gordon states that the combination of recent digital technologies and the ideological return to the archive has enabled scholars to reclaim critical margins and that he was able to "identify, collate, and evaluate all mentions of Stowe's novel" (251). But it is important to not be overly reliant on these techniques and to question what source set is being searched; these texts often have poor OCR, particularly if they are in nonstandard formats that were meant to be ephemeral and poorly printed, which could lead to these sources being further obscured. As Gordon states, "My own sense, and the approach that informed this study, is that we must carefully balance the expanded access provided by digital databases and keyword searches with continued direct engagement with the physical texts themselves, as each confrontation, whether digital or analog, yields different sorts of insight and understanding." (263)

Gordon provides data on how the majority of Douglass' critical engagement with Stowe's novel was through reprinted articles, which allowed conflicting viewpoints and a variety of material forms in his paper. As Gordon states, "This instrumental sense of the utility of criticism is visible, I suggest, through the types of critical forms Douglass reprinted in his paper in which the value of criticism was linked to its practical power to effect social and political change." (254) Gordon provides the excellent example of Douglass reprinting antislavery society minutes, which detailed the treatment of Stowe's novel within the proceedings of an actual political gathering. As Gordon asserts, it is important to read this literary criticism within the context of its material form, and he compares criticism in Douglass' paper to current online communities and reviews, since Douglass similarly offered an alternative vision to scholarly monographs or journal reviews.

Gordon concludes his book with the description of a physical Amazon bookstore and the "democratized critical future" of Amazon reviews but does not mention the reliability of the source of the reviews. But, as he notes, there are many venues for criticism currently, and the form in which it circulates shapes the way that readers consume it and the role it serves within society. On a positive note, Gordon states, "…criticism has never been practiced more widely or more energetically than today; and there have never been more critics than now in the digital era, even if this criticism takes new and unsettling forms." (272) He gestures toward thinking about the new roles for criticism and suggests that criticism is read to feel connected to others in the experience of art: "…reviews in the twenty-first century counter the isolation of late-capitalist culture and bring us together through and around the act of critical reflection. In doing so, criticism has never been more vital to our lives" (273) and that "criticism is at the heart of the experience of being human" (277).

As Gordon points out, there are many new possibilities for building upon his work, particularly with the ever-expanding source sets available online. Based on his presentation of the field, the most evident tension is between the approach of returning to the archives to study the physical items versus using the large-scale digitization projects and databases, but, as the author notes, scholars have been slow to apply newly available digital methodologies to literary criticism. Gordon expertly demonstrates the relevance of his studies to the present moment; as he describes, "As a coda, I turn briefly to the current state of American criticism in the wake of the digital revolution. Where many twenty-first century critics see rupture, however, I see continuity, as technological changes once again prompt an examination of critical principles" and "This approach reaffirms my overriding argument, finally, that to understand criticism, then as now, we need to pay attention to the material form it takes" (35).—*Nicole Topich, Weill Cornell Medical College DeWitt Wallace Institute of Psychiatry*