

Introduction

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Two of the greatest threats to the historic efforts of librarians and others to preserve print special collections and archives have been intentional efforts at their destruction and benign neglect. Richard Ovenden's recent publication, *Burning the Books: A History of the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge* (Belknap/Harvard, 2020), offers a timely survey of the former, and all librarians have lived the quotidian struggle with the latter. Among the more striking passages in the volume by the Bodleian library director is the description of the savage attack in 1992 on the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina; much of its special collections and other holdings and much of its building were destroyed. The fire-fighters and librarians struggling to rescue its collections were even targeted by snipers (Ovenden 2020, 153).

This collection of ten articles is written by those who not only lament the destruction chronicled by Ovenden but have devoted

their professional lives to resisting it. The volume began as an initiative by the editorial board of Books@Atla Open Press, which invited me to serve as editor. In response to a call for proposals in late 2019, eighteen submissions were received. In order to meet the contours of the volume projected, the hard work began to select about ten for inclusion. These would represent some of the variety in the association, the sorts of materials found in American special collections, and the sorts of activities that occupy special collections staff. The spread of the COVID-19 virus created difficulties for all the authors, as libraries and other institutions closed temporarily, restricted staff access to collections, or otherwise made research more difficult. I am deeply grateful for the dedication and resourcefulness of the contributors to complete their projects in a timely manner and for the families, librarians, and others who supported their work.

The articles have been divided into three groups: 1) those with a particularly retrospective focus, 2) those devoted to current efforts to use special collections for teaching and institutional outreach, and 3) those devoted to collection development and the future of special collections. This is by no means a tidy arrangement, since each article was written with its own distinctive aim and not as part of a more specific organizational plan for the volume. Consequently, the articles typically range across past, present, and future, just as librarians—regardless of job assignment—move back and forth through these. Nevertheless, there is a dominant element in each, and this has governed the current arrangement.

Special Collections Retrospective

The first two articles in this section deal with the sixteenth century and the German Reformation of Martin Luther. Armin Siedlecki begins his contribution, appropriately enough, with a quotation from the reformer himself that includes a phrase suitable for the present volume—“that the good books may be preserved and not lost.” What follows is a description of the history, scope, and mission of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection at the Pitts Theology Library. The collection was built on the holdings of the Hartford Seminary Library, which came to Emory University in 1976, but it is now more than three times the size of Hartford’s Reformation collection and includes works by Catholic authors and other Protestant reformers

who engaged Luther. This essay also outlines current efforts to make the collection available to researchers and to nourish university education and the life of the church. In addition to alerting librarians to this rich resource, it may also be that efforts at Pitts to promote the use of the collection will be useful for others seeking to leverage their own collections to the benefit of their clientele.

The second piece is also devoted to one of America's foremost German Reformation collections, assembled by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. This collection is substantially based on the library's purchase of the Phillipps and Stichelberger collections. Caroline Duroselle-Melish writes about those collections in her investigation of the material features of these books and pamphlets. This includes attention to things that bear witness to the earlier lives of the imprints, such as bindings, indications of earlier ownership, manuscript notes and decoration, censorship marks, indexes and concordances created by owners, and corrections to the printed text. Readers should find this analysis richly informative, facilitating a more intelligent "reading" of their own materials.

The third article in this section is a description of the effort at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library to recreate the library of a nineteenth-century faculty member at the parent institution—namely, Convers Francis. Nell Carlson and Russell Pollard embarked on a complex effort to identify the holdings of the Francis library, which was largely present at the Andover-Harvard Library but also included materials that have been scattered among other Harvard libraries and beyond. Making use primarily of manuscript inscriptions, they were able to compile an impressive list of titles in this early and important addition to the divinity library, to update Harvard's online catalog so that users could benefit from their meticulous research, and then to characterize what could be known of Francis's research interests, reading knowledge of languages, and place within the development of Harvard Divinity School. Most librarians have had their curiosity aroused by such indications of former owners of their own materials, and these two Harvard librarians have done us all a service by sharing their strategies for identification of a collection, documentation of findings in an online catalog, and analysis of the owner's theology, interests, and reading habits.

Finally, Bruce Eldevik and Mary Ann Teske turn our attention to the history of special collections at Luther Seminary and how physical space and special collections have impacted the library's outreach. Most of the library's special collections came as donations

from faculty, Lutheran pastors, and area residents and deal with the Lutheran tradition. In addition to the substantial donation of F. A. Schmidt, the Carl Døving Hymnal Collection and the Jacob Tanner Catechism Collection are particularly noteworthy. One of the more interesting developments at the Luther Seminary Library was the renovation of a room that had served as a chapel, a classroom, and then a radio broadcasting studio. This occurred in the 1970s, when the space was transformed into the library's Rare Book Room and began to serve a key role in introducing students and visitors to the world of manuscripts and rare books. This is a timely reminder of a library's ability to inspire wonder and a sense of awe among visitors and to foster resonance with the church's rich liturgical and educational traditions.

Special Collections at Work in Teaching and Research

The second section of articles focuses on current attempts to use special collections in teaching and in the outreach mission of the library and its parent institution. The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary (New York) is one of America's largest and most historically significant theological libraries, and today that institution is now a dynamic partner with Columbia University Libraries. After a brief review of the history of Burke special collections, Matthew Baker describes how these materials have "become a cornerstone of the library's overall mission, touching every facet of collection development, management, and planning." This essay provides an incredibly wide-ranging and instructive tour of the ways that special collections may open the eyes of university students and external audiences to the history of the book, the use of archives and other original resources in research, and engagement with contemporary issues. It cannot help but provoke readers to consider possible analogs in their own institutions.

Christopher Anderson shows how the Yale Divinity Library has made its way in a similar effort to introduce primary sources from its collections into traditional and virtual classrooms. The Day Missions Library and Collection is one of the library's most important resources and plays a major role in these activities. In addition to what

is done on the Yale campus, the library staff has reached out to other institutions to promote the use of the divinity library's manuscript, print, and digital resources and to provide colleagues elsewhere with interesting possibilities to explore. In all this, Anderson reminds readers of how important it is for audiences to have the experience of handling original materials. When this is not possible, there remain attractive possibilities for leveraging digital means to acquaint students with special collections and to encourage their collaboration with librarians to digitize and manipulate rare or unique materials.

The final essay in this section provides an example of a seminary library working with its school's IT staff and administration to create a digital repository for its special collections so that these materials can be offered without charge to audiences around the world. Jonathan Lawler and Shea van Schuyver of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary provide a detailed, technical description of their work and emphasize the importance of considering institutional context, cooperation among all involved, and attention to the long-term durability of the repository. This piece is a helpful reminder of the importance of libraries in supporting research and instruction with a robust digital infrastructure for special collections and of the fact that even smaller institutions can accomplish significant things through collaboration and careful use of the latest digital tools.

Collection Development and the Future of Special Collections

The final section of the volume is devoted to building library collections for the future. All three articles describe past experiences as the basis for future initiatives. The first essay is by Stephen Crocco and draws on his time at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he built two comprehensive research collections. The first was devoted to Karl Barth, one of the twentieth century's most influential theologians, and the second to Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch pastor, neo-Calvinist theologian, and journalist, who also served his nation as prime minister in the early twentieth century. Both collections were eminently suitable for a Reformed seminary, and Crocco was able to establish the Center for Barth Studies and the Abraham Kuyper Institute of Public Theology at Princeton as well. The "backstories" that

Crocco provides for these collection development initiatives makes for interesting reading, and the “lessons learned” have something to offer every library director.

The next article is based on the Drew University Library’s experience with the R. S. Thomas Collection. Brian Shetler and Jesse Mann describe how Drew Theological Seminary alumnus John G. McEllhenney had built his collection of Thomas’s poetry and related materials over many decades and finally donated these to Drew. In addition, the Rev. McEllhenney gave a substantial collection of the works of Robert Frost and materials related to Methodism to the university. This experience provides a useful lesson for libraries in the value of their schools’ alums for the development of special collections. The authors advance their thesis well and provide helpful guidance to the relevant literature along the way.

Anthony Elia of the Bridwell Library at the Southern Methodist University provides a suitable concluding article for this collection. Entitled “The Millennium Project,” Elia’s article is a sweeping and ambitious treatment of the setting of special collections and libraries in the “natural” world and at the midpoint of a millennium that began with Gutenberg. Elia urges his readers to balance their interest in the past with a gaze far into the future and to begin developing “collections in and of the present through endowments, commissions, and newly created works of theological expression—in art, music, and literature—with an eye toward our social responsibilities and the environment.” Such a creative exhortation may well serve as the altar call to theological and religious studies librarians, who not only want to preserve humanity’s literary legacy but also to use these materials for the instruction of generations to come.

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cake. She has been an Atla friend of more than thirty years and is truly one of America's great scholar-librarians.