



# ACCESS

## NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AT NOTRE DAME

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### Library Preservation and Scholarly Responsibility

by Mark D. Jordan, *Medieval Institute*

Scholars are fond of anecdotes about libraries—rare volumes held at last, eccentric curators cajoled, bad citations tracked across aisles in the stacks, up and down flights of stairs, then finally hunted down. In the last few years, new and much sadder anecdotes have begun to circulate. They are stories about appalling losses of books to embrittlement.

My own anecdote is now twelve years old. As a visitor to Harvard's incomparable Widener Library, I went to fetch the original edition of the papal encyclical *Aeterni patris*. The document is rightly regarded as the formal charter for neo-Thomism and so has had enormous influence on the last century of the Church's intellectual life. It was printed shortly after 1879 in the Holy See's *Acta*. As I opened the Widener's copy, scraps of text fluttered to the floor. The book was embrittled, and all its pages had cracked in the binding. It occurred to me that in my lifetime original copies of *Aeterni patris* would become rarer than the incunabula that contain the first printings of Thomas's own texts.

The anecdotes of embrittled books are the scholar's belated recognition of a change in paper manufacture during the middle decades of the 19th century. Different materials and different processes of production have the disastrous consequence of producing paper that pulverizes itself in a matter of decades. Within the next few decades most of the books published commercially between about 1850 and 1980 will undergo this chemical decomposition. Very many books printed between 1850 and 1940 are already far gone, some irretrievably. Indeed, the loss of most original copies will come to pass no matter what we do, because the techniques for deacidifying books or otherwise conserving them are either dubious or too costly for mass use.

If we cannot save the books, we must find ways to save their contents by reformatting, that is, by copying their words and images onto film or electronic media. But even if we proceed with great efficiency to reformat as quickly as we can for the next 20 years, we will not be able to save more than 30 or 35 percent of library holdings with imprints between, say, 1860 and 1940. Let me say this again: About two-thirds of our library holdings for the period of acid paper are almost surely lost.

The shock of this figure is felt only when you perform the experiment of eliminating two-thirds of the scholarly publications in your field for the last 130 years. And the elimination is indiscriminate: It will not distinguish between ephemera and reference works, between indispensable primary texts and outdated commentary, between good journal articles and bad. In fact, the most important material is likely to disappear most quickly, because it has been most heavily used since publication. We see this already at Notre Dame's Medieval Institute, as essential reference volumes disappear from the shelves of the reading room. Some of the most embrittled books are now completely disbound and in

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### Special Collections (Where What's New Is Probably Old)

by Laura Fuderer

The University of Notre Dame is the recent recipient of a magnificent new facsimile of *The Book of Kells* thanks to the Wild Geese, an Irish cultural organization. The Fine Art Facsimile Publishers of Switzerland reserved only 500 copies for the United States. They spent tens of thousands of hours over the last ten years with the experts at Trinity College, Dublin, reproducing this facsimile, which is heralded by scholars and book lovers as: "The first to be done in entirety and in full color."

Pages were photographed, analyzed electronically, exposed on film by laser, and color corrected by hand. On the average each facsimile page crossed the Channel five times. Trinity College Librarian Peter Fox believes the facsimile is scarcely distinguishable from the original. The paper reproduces the texture, uneven edges, holes, defects, and repairs of the original parchment pages. Each volume was sewn and bound by hand in the medieval style.

*The Book of Kells* is arguably the most famous, some would say the most beautiful, monumental Gospel book produced in the Middle Ages. It consists of the four Gospels in Latin, written in a calligraphic style known as Insular majuscule, and is intricately, almost incredibly, decorated throughout. The book was written around 800 A.D. presumably by Celtic monastic scribes, but we are unsure

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## **LIBRARY** *continued from page 1*

boxes, where the loose pages can be consulted one by one—unless the particular page you need has broken completely into scraps.

If we cannot save even the contents of all the books in our academic libraries—and we cannot—then we must do our best to save what is most important. To refuse to organize ourselves in order to make the best choices is to abdicate responsibility for the future of studies in our several fields. There is no longer a distinction to be defended between scholarship and library preservation, as if the latter were the business only of librarians and not of scholars. Our scholarship requires of us that we become preservationists. To be a humanistic scholar in the last decades of this century is perforce to be engaged in making decisions to save libraries. I sometimes say this to myself as a confession: I do not know whether my work on Thomas Aquinas will have any value for subsequent Thomists, but I do know with certainty that I can deprive all future Thomists of a part of their inheritance by failing to preserve the best work of the last century and a half.

Humanistic scholars have been slow to see the problem of library preservation, much less to act on it. The triage of scholarly materials that our situation forces on us cuts against our formation in many ways. We have been trained to preserve evidence, no matter how incidental it seems; to expect that later generations will reverse our judgements of importance even as they preserve our results; to delight in the improbable richness of variety and disagreement. When we are asked to cull the work of our teachers and our teachers' teachers, to make perhaps irreversible decisions about scholarly posterity, our first reaction must be to refuse. But we no longer have the luxury of refusal.

Large-scale preservation projects in the humanities have been undertaken by the learned societies and professional organizations. One pioneering project was organized by the classicists through the American Philological Association, another for theological libraries by the American Theological Library Association. Other projects are now being planned with the advice and support of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Commission on Preservation and Access. Notre Dame hosted a conference on preservation in March of this year for the Medieval Academy of America, and Notre Dame's Medieval Institute will take a leading role in the Academy's new effort to preserve nationally important collections for medieval studies. (Copies of the conference's proceedings will be published shortly by the Hesburgh Library.)

These large-scale programs offer the benefits of coordination and standardization. They can provide resources—of technology and funding—now beyond the reach of individual libraries. But the decisions about preserving scholarship are scholarly decisions. They are not peripheral or instrumental to scholarship. On the contrary, they provoke the fundamental questions about disciplinary history, "objectivity," and cultural continuity. Moreover, they affect in the most intimate way our ability to pursue our research. If for no nobler reason, scholars should see that library preservation is their self-preservation.

## **Thank You**

**T**he Department of Special Collections would like to thank all its users for their cooperation in conforming to our new and more restrictive policies regarding the use of our materials.

Why the need for greater control? You may recall the publicity that the University Libraries received last April when some of our rare books were found in Ottumwa, Iowa. They were among a cache of books that were stolen from institutions around the country and valued at \$20 to \$30 million. This Department was already reconsidering its security procedures in light of standard guidelines recommended by the Association of College and Research Libraries. The incident in Ottumwa gave impetus to our new procedures, which were put into effect in late summer.

We are most gratified that steady and occasional users alike have enthusiastically rallied to our cause, and would like to extend, in behalf of future generations, a public "thanks" to everyone.

## **Collection Building for Gender Studies**

*by G. Margaret Porter*

**D**uring the past two decades women's studies programs have become part of the curriculum at many institutions of higher education in the United States. With the development of this interdisciplinary field of study, a core of research materials made its way into academic libraries even where no women's studies programs existed. Their presence in these libraries was often the result of an effort on the part of teaching and research faculty to "mainstream" feminist scholarship into the curriculum, and of their librarian colleagues to integrate the selection of women's materials into the selection process of the various disciplines involved. A recent development is gender studies, also multidisciplinary and heavily dependent on women's studies in terms of research methods and bibliography. It recognizes that the discipline involves both women *and* men as it looks at gender and power relationships.

At the University of Notre Dame a concentration in gender studies within the College of Arts and Letters became available for undergraduates a few years ago. It "... focuses on the investigation of gender as an element of relationships in the social order and as a primary category of experience, and ... draws attention to the ways in which ideological conceptions of masculinity and femininity shape

human institutions and possibilities for human development." (*University of Notre Dame Bulletin of Information, 1989-90*). With the introduction of this program the University Libraries has made an effort to add to its collections material dealing with gender issues. A library liaison officer for gender studies has been appointed, but no separate funding has been made available for collection development for this area. While the lack of funding is an obstacle, it has not yet been an insurmountable problem. However, it is anticipated that building the collections necessary for research will become more and more difficult without funding.

Collection building for gender studies is truly an interdisciplinary endeavor. All subject areas from anthropology to zoology have to be covered, and materials which fall into categories such as women's studies, feminist studies, men's studies, and gender studies, as well as any gender related aspect of any subject, have to be considered for acquisition.

Most mainstream, or core materials are acquired through the Libraries' book approval plan, which either provides a physical copy which can be examined on-site, or a form which has to be submitted for ordering. Since approval plan items are paid for by a fund separate from departmental funds, acquiring core material for gender studies has not been a problem. The publishers within the approval plan include all university presses, other academic publishers, large commercial publishers, as well as some small presses.

In addition to the approval plan, material selection is accomplished by using standard reviewing tools such as *Choice: Current Reviews for College Libraries*, *New York Times Book Reviews*, *Times Literary Supplement*, etc. Funding becomes a little more complex with material selected from these sources as the subject category has to be established (sometimes a tricky endeavor with interdisciplinary items), so that the correct bibliographer/liaison officer can be approached for ordering each individual item. The same general approach is taken with material selected from publishers' catalogs and lists and with faculty requests.

However, much of the material pertinent to gender studies is not necessarily reviewed and listed in standard sources, neither is it published by academic or large commercial publishers. There is a real danger that ephemeral and small press materials will be sacrificed for mainstream material. Much of what is important to gender issues suffers from the "thin book syndrome." Due to insignificant size it is often overlooked for selection and acquisitions. To try to reach as much of this material as possible, catalogs and booklists from small presses are used heavily as are journals, magazines, and newsletters dealing with gender issues, women's studies, and men's studies. In publications such as *Belles Lettres*, *Women's Review of Books*, *Genders*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, and *Men's Studies Review*, books from publishers such as Clothespin Fever Press, Naiad Press, Firebrand Books, Cleis Press, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Spinsters/Aunt Lute, and Alyson Publications are reviewed.



During the past two years several journals addressing gender related issues have been ordered. Journals such as *Gender and History*, *Journal of Women's History*, *Women and Politics*, *Feminist Review*, *Genders*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, *Men's Studies Review*, *Women's Review of Books* cut across specific subject categories, while focusing their content on gender issues. Requests for new serials are channeled through the Libraries' Collection Development Committee which allocates monies for them from the separate serials budget.

The lack of specific funding is most problematic when expensive reference works, microform sets and collections are requested. These types of materials are very much a part of research oriented collections, but are usually very costly. Often financing external to the Libraries has to be sought. Currently there is a library "wish list" of materials containing items such as: *The Black Women Oral History Project* (10 volumes, \$995); *History of Women in America* (20 volumes, \$1,900); *The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (51 rolls of 35mm microfilm, \$3,700); and *The Ladies Home Journal* (covering 1884-1989 on 35mm microfilm, \$3,149).

There are certain areas within the collection of gender studies materials that will need to be addressed in the future by all libraries. The international aspects of gender issues is an area where research is increasing, as is the relationship of gender and science. Manuscripts and archives of women's materials need to be made public as well as preserved for future use. Although reprints and rediscoveries of earlier published material have become more prevalent (Pandora and Virago are two examples of such publishing ventures), more needs to be done in this area.

As the University of Notre Dame celebrates **The Year of Women**, let us hope that funding can be secured for library materials relating to women and gender, both in terms of what is on the "wish list," and in areas identified as needing growth and development.

# From the Director: Changing Times and Media

by Robert C. Miller

Library life was certainly much easier, less complicated and cheaper when I began in this business over 30 years ago. I had to learn about book history, book and journal publishing, relatively simple rules for cataloging, and a large number of reference books of various types. But it was all reasonably self-contained and humanistic. Of course, for the researcher working in the library it was more difficult and the results of his or her effort less complete.

The principal cause of the change between then and now is the development of computer technology, and in particular the appearance of electronic media. Until these appeared, only certain esoteric—from my perspective—scientists and engineers concerned with various types of number crunching and modeling needed computers. Today, however, electronic media are affecting all disciplines—art, classics, history, literature, philosophy, theology, and the various social sciences. While the extent of the impact varies from area to area, the importance of these media will continue to grow significantly over the next few years. I say this, fully confident of the continuing importance of print medium for the indefinite future.

I use the term electronic media very loosely, to cover any type of electronically recorded information intended for access or use by a relatively broad audience, and not just its creator. In the rough order of historical introduction the media have covered numeric (census & survey data), bibliographic (indexes and library catalogs), full text (plays, novels, historical documents) and most recently graphic and audio information (maps, music, paintings, photographs and speeches). Such information is currently being “stored” in a wide variety of formats including floppy and hard disks for PC’s, CD-ROM’s, locally mounted tape and other mainframe storage media, and external mainframe machines. Not surprisingly, such information can be found resident on personal machines, in the Libraries’ collections on CD-ROM readers, or in the circulating collections independently, or in connection with print material; on the campus mainframe machines, or externally on mainframe machines operated by other universities or commercial vendors. The subjects covered include architectural drawings, art exhibit catalogs, U.S. census data, crystallographic information, French historical literary texts, Biblical texts, phone books and other types of directories, the plays of Shakespeare, the works of individual philosophers, ancient Greek materials, *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*, legal materials, and the *Zoological Record*. Clearly, electronic media affect, or will come to affect, the entire University community.

What does all this mean to the researcher in pursuit of information, regardless of discipline? Potentially, at least, it means faster, easier and more complete information on a text of Euripides, the structure of a chemical compound, the contextual use of the word “liberté” in Rousseau, the corporate officers of International Petroleum Corporation, the

aging population in Peoria, steel production in Italy, or a comprehensive bibliography on drug treatment of AIDS. It also means, at least potentially, incorporating this information with ease into a personal database for future use, passing on the information to a colleague at UC-Santa Barbara and, most excitingly, opening new approaches to research in some disciplines through Boolean and full text searching, which permits asking questions that were not reasonable to ask before. Moreover, coupled with telecommunications and networking technology, electronic media free the researcher from the need to go to the library. In essence the library, at least that portion in electronic form, can come to the researcher at home, in an office or a dorm room. These capabilities should significantly increase the productivity of both students and faculty. On the downside, effective use of these media and the technology which makes them feasible will require much greater individual attention to keeping up with both the databases and the technology and the need to periodically update local hardware and software.

Clearly, these are wonderful benefits to the researcher, student or faculty. But what is the impact on the Libraries? In one sense it is very positive for it makes the work of the librarian far more challenging and rewarding. At the same time, it does mean some complications for the Libraries. Most importantly, it requires significantly greater technical knowledge by librarians in order to be able to provide meaningful access to this broad range of new information resources. Moreover, the current lack of standardization among these various products and services means that each librarian must acquire a working familiarity with a much broader range of products, services, and user interfaces. Collectively, it also means more time must be spent in assisting individual patrons in the effective use of these services and in maintaining and servicing the related equipment.

But what does all this mean in financial terms, the bottom line to anyone living on a budget, including the University Libraries? Certainly, more and more specialized staff will be required, and as higher levels of knowledge and skill became necessary, salary levels can be expected to increase. Most material in electronic form is for the present significantly more expensive than print equivalents. The reasons for this phenomenon are complex, but relate largely to market size and the fear of losing the paper product market. Eventually, but not for many years, this should change as more individual users acquire personal hardware, and electronic publishing becomes the predominant mode for certain types of information transfer. There is another major cost factor with electronic media, since it requires expensive equipment for use. Thus, the initial cost of installing a CD-ROM network with only ten stations—a goal for the current year—is significantly greater than the Libraries’ capital budget for the year. Moreover, that equipment is likely to become outdated within five to seven years. Finally, it is unlikely—and probably inappropriate in the short run—for the library to generally replace paper-based sources when the electronic equivalent is acquired. Thus, all costs are add-on costs.

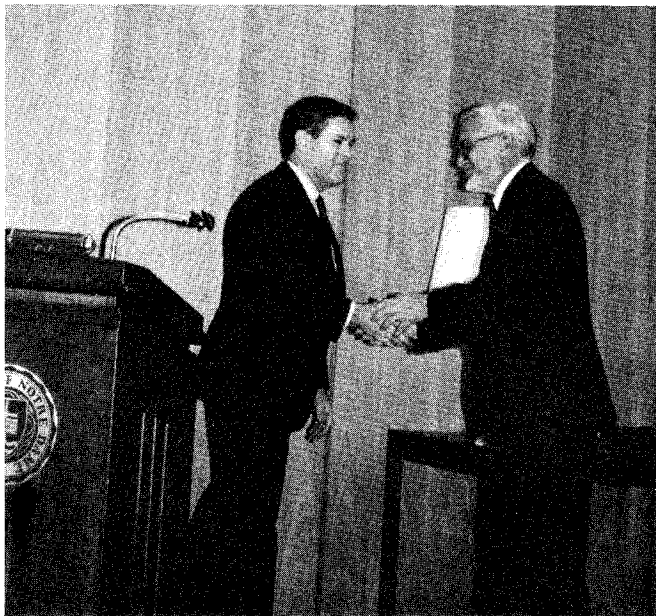
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## **SPECIAL** *continued from page 1*

whether they were located in Ireland, Northumbria, or elsewhere. It was found buried at Kells in 1006 and more than 600 years later was taken to Trinity College. Originally bound in one volume, it was separated into four parts in 1953. The parts are on permanent display in Trinity College Library. However, the pages are turned only once a month. This limitation on viewing is one reason that the facsimile is heralded by scholars and book-lovers. In addition, binding the facsimile in one volume gives readers a truer impression of the book as it was created.

One of those to extol the new accessibility of *The Book of Kells* is Umberto Eco. A companion volume to the facsimile includes scholarly essays on the text, the illuminations, and its history. In the introduction Eco describes its continuing impact particularly on James Joyce in *Finnegan's Wake* ("the tenebrous *Tunc* page of the Book of Kells"). Eco calls it a murmur, a labyrinth, "a model of a universe in expansion, perhaps finite but still limitless, the starting point for infinite interrogations, for a maze of hermeneutics without end."

The facsimile and its specially constructed box of metal and black leather are on display in the Reading Room of the Department of Special Collections (102 Hesburgh Library). The facsimile and the companion volume are accessible to users upon request. Please stop by for a look the next time you are in the Library.



P. Karpinski

*Wild Geese representative Robert Fox and Director of Libraries Robert C. Miller at Book of Kells dedication ceremony, November 8, 1990*

## **FROM** *continued from page 4*

These various considerations make it clear that electronic media will drive up library budget needs in some dramatic ways. It also suggests that the budgeting process within the Libraries will be increasingly complex both between expense categories (personnel, capital and acquisitions) and within acquisitions as traditional discipline-based budgeting becomes less meaningful with electronic media.

As the University Libraries work to bring the promise of electronic media to the University community at Notre Dame, there are a number of issues which require special attention. In some cases, the University community must be fully involved in the final decision-making. Perhaps the major policy issue requiring broad involvement is who will pay for these new information resources. In recent years the Libraries have offered access to most external databases for faculty and students on a fee basis, designed to recover direct vendor charges billed to the Libraries. This practice, adopted with great reluctance, was necessitated by the potentially unlimited costs involved with this kind of service and the absence of new funding to support it. A strong case can be made for these costs being absorbed by the University, i.e. Libraries, since the Libraries already "pay" for the print versions of these information resources. For that to happen, however, both new funding and allocation mechanisms are necessary to support such indeterminate costs.

There are also more technical issues that also carry cost implications. For example, many databases are accessed through at least three different methods: loaded locally on the Libraries' computer, on CD-ROM, or through access to external services such as Dialog. In some cases, copies can be available on floppy disk or CD-ROM for use on personal hardware. In general, there is an inverse relationship between cost and accessibility. Thus local mainframe loading provides the greatest accessibility, but at the highest cost. The current sense is that heavily used databases would ideally be offered through the mainframe, moderate use materials through CD-ROM, and little used material through external or individual copy access. Unfortunately, each source has its own technical and financial problems, so the resolution of these issues will be slow and complex.

Another set of local issues revolve around delivery capabilities, both on and off campus. These include the easy downloading of information from UNLOC and other bibliographic and text files to personal disk files, enhanced printing capabilities, and the ability to readily forward information to researchers at other locations.

Finally, there are a large set of issues beyond local control involving copyright and more general intellectual property rights for information in electronic form. While Notre Dame can do little itself to resolve these issues, we will need to closely monitor and influence, as we can, developments on the national level.

Electronic media provide a great opportunity for improving research capabilities for Notre Dame and the research library community generally. They also present major challenges at both the technological and policy levels to the realization of their potential in a reasonable way, within available financial resources. Success will require the cooperative efforts of many different agencies both inside and outside the University.

# Breakthrough

by Charlotte Ames

A victory in providing access to pamphlet literature contained in microform collections occurred in June, 1990. At that time Robert Wittorf, the University Libraries' Assistant Director for Systems and Administrative Services, and the Systems Office programmers tapeloaded *Pamphlets in American History: Group IV: Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism* into UNLOC. This particular microform set, which provides extremely rich resources in American Catholic pamphlet literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries, consists of 1,340 titles on 1,504 microfiche.

Whereas previously only one collective entry under title for the entire set appeared in UNLOC, by tapeloading, individual entries now appear for each of the pamphlets. Patrons can now access the entire collection by author, title, subject, and keyword searching. The printed guide to the collection, *Pamphlets in American History: Group IV: A Bibliographic Guide to the Microform Collection*, edited by Michael J. Matochik (Sanford, N.C.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1983) still remains very useful in providing an overview. However, online access dynamically expands the parameters of the indexes in the printed guide, and promotes much greater potential use of the collection.

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