

*Special Collections
at Work in Teaching
& Research*

Gifts of Great Libraries

*Teaching with Special Collections at the Burke Library
at Union Theological Seminary*

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The special collections of the Burke Library began with the 1836 founding of Union Theological Seminary.¹ As with many historic collections in the United States and elsewhere, its earliest stages of growth occurred through a combination of accident, gifts, and purposeful acquisition, and often some combination of these. The history of the Burke from its founding until the 1980s has been ably detailed in Thomas Slavens's *A Great Library Through Gifts* (1986). Slavens draws on the several works about the history of Union and its library written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as his own extensive research in Union's administrative records (Prentiss 1889, 1899; Handy 1986). The years since Slavens wrote have been marked by important changes in the Burke's collections in general and particularly by its work in building and sharing special collections. The use of special collections for teaching has become a

cornerstone of the library's overall mission, touching every facet of collection development, management, and planning.

A few highlights from the history of the Burke's collections will provide some background to the examples and discussion below. The celebrated Leander van Ess Collection illustrates the first of these factors noted above—accident—not unusual among nineteenth-century libraries. Founding faculty member Edward Robinson, traveling in Europe on his way to the Near East to conduct the geographical research for which he is most remembered, became aware that the aging Van Ess, a former Benedictine monk, was interested in selling his large, important, and well-preserved collection of manuscripts and early printed editions (Gatch 1996).² Robinson persuaded the fledgling seminary to provide what was then the considerable sum of \$5,000 to acquire it. It was a risk and would constitute a financial burden to the seminary for several decades. It also indicates the importance, from the outset, of its library for the seminary's educational mission. The Van Ess materials remain among the most celebrated of their kind, especially because many preserve unique material evidence in original bindings, which has too often been lost or destroyed due to "preservation" work done by past owners or collectors wanting to repair or otherwise rebind them.

It is also a noteworthy irony that a Roman Catholic monastery would be the foundational source for a liberal Protestant seminary, and that within the Van Ess Collection were many pamphlets and books by early Protestant Reformers such as Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingli. Less surprising, perhaps, were the scores of medieval manuscript Bibles and liturgical and theological works that form the core of the Burke's western manuscript collection, as well as hundreds of incunabula.³

A second foundation story can be told about the Burke's McAlpin Collection of British History and Theology—a combination of gift and purposeful acquisition. Funded in large part by Union board member David Hunter McAlpin—a real estate and tobacco magnate—several early librarians (notably Charles Briggs—famously tried for heresy in 1892 and co-editor of the Hebrew lexicon—and Ezra Hall Gillett) were able to acquire the thousands of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British printed editions in the collection bearing McAlpin's name (Gillett 1927–30; Slavens 1986, 118). This collection includes many important works of early English Deism, Protestantism, and Civil War pamphlet literature, of a scope arguably unmatched this side of the Atlantic, apart perhaps from the Folger Library.

A third collection further illustrates a confluence of the accidental and the purposeful, and how the nature of special collections' growth, use, and significance can change quite dramatically over time. The Missionary Research Library (MRL) was founded following the 1911 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference (Dictionary Catalog 1968). Over the course of the twentieth century, a veritable avalanche of archives, books, pamphlets, reports, maps, and other genres poured in from around the world, even as the very meaning of "missions" changed dramatically, and the economic and cultural power of the mainline denominations supporting the enterprise began to wane (Hollinger 2017). By the 1970s, the MRL had run out of resources, and its collections became part of the Burke Library. Although it was conceived and developed to further Christian proselytization, in recent decades it is understood and used as a unique body of global primary sources sought out by historians, anthropologists, linguists, and others (interestingly, by scholars often not specifically studying religious history or theology per se).

Other such stories of bibliographic adventurism, philanthropy, and fortuitous accident could be told by other libraries. The crucial event in the recent history of the Burke Library is its having joined the Columbia University Libraries (CUL) system in 2004. In addition to Columbia, Morningside Heights in Manhattan is also home, within approximately ten city blocks, to Union Theological Seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Manhattan School of Music, Barnard College, Columbia's Teachers College, the Bank Street School of Education, the Riverside Church, and the ecumenical Interchurch Center. There is a long history of formal and informal relationships among these institutions, including cross-registration and dual-appointed faculty. The change in the Burke's institutional context opened many new opportunities for using collections for learning and research, particularly at Columbia and Barnard Colleges, with their rich humanities and social sciences curricula, including the fields of religion, history, classics, and global studies. Unique among peer theology and religion libraries, the Burke is a member of a large research library system while being located within and continuing to serve the administratively independent Union Theological Seminary. As part of CUL, the Burke Library's mission is also shaped by consortial relationships in metropolitan New York as well as by broad inter-institutional contexts such as Ivy Plus and ReCAP.⁴

These collections are now central to its special collections. They are foundational to nearly every aspect of its ongoing work, from

new collecting to digitization to instructional efforts. The following discussion will address how the Burke's librarians have worked to integrate special collections into primarily undergraduate and master's level courses to foster an embodied, immersive, and contextually attuned approach to learning.

Working Collections

Since special collections are at the heart of the Burke's services, they are very much developed and managed as "working collections." In some fashion, this has always been the case, with rare books, archives, and ephemera accessible by appointment and available for consultation by faculty, students, and visiting researchers. Generally, this approach has best served specialists: advanced scholars trained to use resources like union catalogs, complex databases, and domain-specific tools. In the past decade in particular, the work of integrating collections into courses and getting them into the hands of undergraduate and master's degree students has been a consistent focus and goal, shaping every facet of our mission, staffing, and planning. The Burke staff are actively exploring ways to connect students with special collections and to creatively and holistically integrate them into the curricula of the departments it supports. Simply put, teaching with special collections is the core of the Burke Library's mission. This constitutes both a deep connection with its history (noted above) and an energetic and careful engagement with present and future new directions.

The embodied, tactile qualities of special collections are integral to their meaning and therefore essential to their uses for teaching. The more abstract, two-dimensional realm of the digital, with accompanying perceptions and expectations of ubiquitous and perpetual availability, is contextualized and challenged by the immediacy, irreplaceability, and fragility of physical objects. As librarians well know, there are so many strands of human knowledge and culture that have vanished, never to be recovered. With students of theology or religion, for example, the focus may often be on ideas and concepts. Important though these are, it is also important to study the material forms in which these ideas have been recorded, transmitted, and preserved, as essential aspects of their ongoing value and meaning. John Dewey once famously critiqued those who "seem to

accept a dogma of immaculate conception of philosophical systems” (quoted in McGilchrist 2009, 385). The same dogma can sometimes be assumed about theological or other theoretical systems, and special collections serve as an important reminder of their corporeal origins.

Despite having many museum-caliber holdings, the Burke Library is not a museum. What may be behind glass at the Met is available for use and study at the Burke. To enable this, training in proper handling is a crucial initial step, and the expertise of Columbia’s conservation team is therefore indispensable. We want the materials to be experienced safely, with appropriate care and also without undue intimidation. Such training and support, with all the instruction and practice required to become responsible “users” of special material, is integral to the process. To some extent, it involves passing on the ethos of librarians, curators, and conservators—stewardship, care, and a longer view of our place in the materials’ story—that is itself a perennial learning outcome. The goal is not necessarily to make more librarians or archivists (though that has happened and is a wonderful result!) but to establish a shared understanding of responsibility and appreciation. Neither is the goal necessarily to create more advanced graduate students, but the seemingly paradoxical aim of both demystifying and creating an appropriate sense of reverence for what has (and, by implication, what has not) made it through the vicissitudes of history to our own time. Creating trained confidence in how to safely approach and handle such materials involves our users in better understanding and supporting the stewardship responsibilities of libraries—the planning, knowledge, and labor involved in keeping historical sources (all of them ephemeral by nature) available for study, criticism, and inspiration.

A Teaching Library

The fact that the Burke serves several kinds of academic community—a theological seminary, graduate programs in the humanities and social sciences, undergraduates at Columbia and Barnard—offers opportunities for staff to explore a variety of approaches to teaching with special collections. I will summarize a number of examples, focusing primarily on undergraduate and master’s degree levels, as well as some examples beyond primary institutional affiliations. In

closing, I will offer some observations and commentary on what we have learned so far.

Columbia's Core Curriculum

Since joining the Columbia University Libraries system, an important area of growth for the Burke's special collections services has been to support Columbia's undergraduate Core Curriculum, a required sequence of undergraduate courses engaging literature, history, philosophy, science, and the arts from the ancient through the modern worlds. Often, this takes a familiar form of hosting one or two course meetings per semester, where librarians offer a presentation of materials to complement or illustrate the modern editions of course texts. There have, however, also been other important opportunities to offer more sustained support and invite students to learn with collections beyond this more conventional (though still important and helpful) approach.

One Core course—The Global History of the Book, designed and taught by classics professor Joseph Howley—worked closely with all Columbia's special collections libraries over the course of the semester, as well as the conservation and digitization labs, and it included a visit to ReCAP. Students experienced a holistic, semester-long exploration of the process of manuscript production, early and modern printing, and the impact of modern technologies on the creation, development, and dissemination of knowledge, as well as on current technical processes, such as digitization and metadata creation. Special collections were deeply embedded throughout the design and structure of the course, and students experienced how a range of original objects have been created and used across space and time, as well as gaining a “nuts and bolts” exposure to how surrogates are created and the many infrastructural and ethical questions related to providing access and use.

A second example, which will be familiar to seminary and divinity libraries, involves teaching the history of format: from papyrus to scroll, parchment to paper, and medieval codex to early printed book. For a range of courses on the Bible (and its influences) and religious history, this brings into focus the means of transmission, showing the many ways by which texts and ideas have been preserved and transmitted and are inseparable from their meaning and significance. This can take many forms and be incorporated at many stages

in a course: the propagandistic role of the pamphlet or the image in the Protestant Reformation, the way printers and scholars collaborated in the early modern period to establish and disseminate authoritative editions of biblical or scientific texts and accompanying paratextual tools, the ways in which serial literature's explosion in the nineteenth century was a scholarly tool and a tangible expression of mass culture and consumerism. Not surprisingly for a Western, theologically-rooted library, the medieval and early modern periods are particular strengths, as well as the nineteenth-century Protestant global missionary movement. Since the last of these has informed so many subsequent developments—imperialism and colonialism, the history of the study of world religions, the emergence of the current approaches to the study of history and the social sciences, the development of modern education and healthcare, among others—they offer a rich source of reflection for a range of courses. Burke librarian Jeffrey Wayno has worked with special collections staff across CUL in developing a faculty-facing “menu” of offerings to engage faculty and support them in course design and planning. A frequent and welcome result is the chance to connect with individual students, learn about their particular interests and projects, and assist in scheduling additional consultations and appointments.

Religion in the Archive

The Barnard College Religion Department has twice offered an undergraduate course—Religion in the Archive. It was designed by Professor Gale Kenny from its inception with sustained engagement with archival collections at its very center. Focusing on the papers of Mathilda Calder Thurston—an American missionary to China and founder of Ginling College (the first four-year women's college in China)—the course requires students to work in the library, individually and in groups, with the physical collection throughout the semester (“View from Ginling” n.d.). Students explore questions of colonial power and gender, for example, in working closely and carefully through the archival papers, as well as in addressing theoretical and historical aspects of archival history and practice. As final projects, they create and curate a series of interconnected Web exhibits, including mapping and data visualization, and consider the ethical, legal, and intellectual issues related to digital humanities. Students participate in the full gamut of activities needed to digitize archival

materials, including creation and management of their own research and image database systems, annotation and metadata creation, site design, project management, and rights assessment. One assignment asks students to draft a grant proposal to support conducting archival research at a repository of their choice. Professor Kenny's course is a model of collaborative engagement with special collections in the classroom, from basic physical access issues through the research process to sophisticated presentations of course outcomes through the media of digital humanities.

Religion Lab

Barnard College religion majors are required to take Religion Lab, which introduces them to a range of research methods into primary sources—from museum studies to fieldwork to visual culture to oral history and, of course, archival research. The Burke plays a central role in supporting hands-on work with archives: what they might contain, how and why they are collected and described as they are, and their responsible use. Supported by the Burke's outreach archivist⁵ Leah Edelman, this experience in the archives encourages an inductive approach to the collections, moving from the broader finding aid perspective to closer examination of particular portions of larger collections to explore their detailed contents, as well as how their structure as archives inevitably shapes how they are understood and used. One of the several assignments for the course requires students to analyze questions of archival provenance, arrangement, and access. As with the Core and elsewhere, students are offered an opportunity to reflect together on the “how” as well as the “what” of special collections.

Queering Ethics

In the seminary context, an example of deep engagement with special collections has been Union's Queering Ethics course. MDiv and MA students worked with Union's administrative and faculty archives and with the Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship (AWTS) to examine questions of gender, ethics, justice, and identity in the social, theological, and educational milieus of the United States. Students were assigned readings on the history, theory, and

practice of archives, working with Burke librarian Caro Bratnober to engage institutional and personal archival papers and address key critical, practical, and historical questions concerning them (e.g., Manoff 2004). Students were invited to consider what kinds of documentation is and is not included in archives, explicit and implicit meaning, and how factors like selection and archival arrangement impact meaning. Significantly, students were offered the opportunity to complete an archives-based project in lieu of a final exam, and many opted to do so. These projects entailed making multiple appointments in the archives and working closely with an archival collection of their choice and with library staff, and their projects were presented in the library at the end of the semester. Central to the course was examining how the practices of archival collecting and organization can evolve to better reflect and collect silenced or marginalized voices and perspectives—an urgent concern for every special collection (Bratnober 2019).

Tracing the Sources

The Burke has also explored some approaches to teaching with special collections instruction that can be adapted to various occasions. Former Burke librarian Elizabeth Call co-organized a conference on the Student Interracial Ministry (SIM), which originated at Union in the 1960s and whose archives are held at the Burke (Cline 2017). In conjunction with the conference were “pop-up” archives exhibits from the SIM collection for students and alumni and sessions in a Union course studying the SIM. One very helpful exercise related to David Cline’s history of the SIM movement (Cline 2016). Students were asked to read short sections of Cline’s monograph and then consulted the sections of the SIM archives Cline had cited. Guided by a series of questions, they discussed how the sources had been integrated into the narrative or argument, what information was contained in the collection itself and what from broader knowledge of other sources, and whether they had any questions or critiques of the author’s use of the source material. It was a small-scale and impactful attempt to look “under the hood” at how historians use original primary sources in constructing a narrative or analyzing complex events.

Many undergraduates and master’s students work with secondary sources—the monographs, chapters, and articles resulting from scholars’ use of primary materials that are the “end products” of ad-

vanced research with primary sources. This exercise can have a formative impact, whether or not the student plans to pursue more advanced study. Having been through the process with one collection or part of a collection, the insights can be borne in mind as showing the critical and imaginative processes by which arguments are made and articles and books are written. Just following one citation, seeing its original location in a letter, for example, or report or meeting minutes, illustrates its embeddedness in the context of a document, collection, institution, or occasion. Particularly for undergraduate and master's students, it has been a fruitful exercise that reveals how sources inform the dialogical process of conducting original research.

Another set of archival teaching sessions related to the 2015 centenary of the Armenian Genocide and coincided with the completion of the MRL's Near East Relief papers. Not surprisingly, given the timing, there was considerable interest by researchers in this collection. More open-ended than the SIM sessions, students discussed the events of 1915 generally, looked at correspondence and other primary documents from the collection (e.g., letters, fundraising appeals, and contemporary accounts), and then shared what they found and how it informed their understanding of the events. With this, as with the examples noted so far, there is often an important element of peer learning that emerges organically. Getting involved in physically working with materials, whether based on an assignment or a set of tasks, students "sharing out" what they are finding has often led to a powerful experience of collaboration, with those more experienced with special collections taking the lead or assisting those newer to the process.

These are examples of putting students in extended contact with physical collections and asking them to consider a range of questions, anchored by the collections: On the basis of this document or set of papers, what conclusions can (or cannot) reasonably be drawn? What is missing? What might one wish were there, but isn't, and why might that be? What seems assumed but not explicitly stated, and on what grounds? Is that assumption discernable in the source itself or perhaps a function of the researcher, or some combination? A discussion that frequently and somewhat soberingly arises, when considering printed correspondence from the pre-digital era, is how much correspondence from more recent years has been and will be lost, even as libraries and others strive to find ways to collect and preserve email and other "born digital" content.

Another approach to teaching special collections addresses how they may relate to surrogate forms of access. For example, we ask students to consider the differences in meaning between an English Civil War pamphlet they hold in their hands and a digital version in Early English Books Online (EEBO). Both have a place, of course, but which needs and questions are best served by digital resources like EEBO, and which by an opportunity to experience the object? Or, if one is looking at, for example, the artistry of a woodcut or engraving, what is gained or lost by the different means of accessing it? A similar approach has been taken in comparing a physical manuscript codex and its (partial) surrogate in the Digital Scriptorium. Again, both have an important role for research, but taking time to experience and discuss the very palpable differences has proven to be an impactful approach, even (or especially) for those who might be encountering such materials for the first time. Taking a related approach, we have invited students to look at the quaintly old-fashioned format of microfiche—for many students, in fact, an unknown medium—and compare them with commercial databases containing some of the same texts and, in turn, with a physical copy of the same thing. Simultaneous consideration of the “many lives” of an item is a productive occasion to reckon with how the means by which we encounter and use a document often significantly impact our understanding of it. (And of course, as librarians know, many important sources from around the world remain accessible only in this format.)

History of Christianity

Not surprisingly, an important aspect of special collections teaching for the Burke and other theology libraries involves supporting courses in biblical studies and the history of Christianity. We continue to draw on time-tested methods: examining papyri (both to illustrate the nature of the earliest strata of textual evidence and the vagaries of scribal practice, as well as to try students’ New Testament Greek skills on some difficult-to-decipher material), visiting Columbia’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library to consult its collection of Graeco-Roman coins and consider the economic and imperial contexts of early Christianity, using medieval manuscripts to understand the preciousness of books before printing and the skill and labor involved making and preserving them, studying the pamphlet literature of the Reformation as a technological and mass media phe-

nomenon to make clearer the sheer volume of polemic pouring off the early presses, and examining the proliferation of paratextual commentary that quickly emerged even among the “*sola scriptura*” Reformation traditions. Beyond these important and worthwhile approaches, a few examples illustrate attempts to draw on the material nature of unique special collections to open up new perspectives on course outcomes.

The Burke archives hold the papers of two of the three editors of the “BDB”—the *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*—Charles Briggs and Francis Brown. Both collections contain extensive research notes and files used in compiling the lexicon, amply illustrated close analysis of citations and usage, and meticulous hand annotations. They illustrate the long, painstaking, often unacknowledged work involved in lexicography and make clear the dynamic nature of language and diction that may seem more fixed on the pages of a reference work.⁶ With a bit of experience learning biblical Hebrew under students’ belts, spending some time with these collections offers awe-inspiring evidence of the long, slow, difficult work behind such powerful and helpful digital tools as Accordance, Logos, the TLG, and the Perseus Project—these tools also being reminders that the “digital humanities” have their roots in the ancient fields of biblical studies and classics.

Another approach creatively utilizing special collections for teaching was Prof. Jane Huber’s church history survey course, in which students were offered the assignment of writing a “biography” of a manuscript or rare book from the collections. Combining the art of bibliography and the historical survey content of the course, students worked together with librarians to closely examine and describe a medieval or early modern biblical, theological, or liturgical work. Students made multiple appointments to work with librarians in the reading room to learn proper handling and waded into the domains of codicology and descriptive bibliography (i.e., measuring, collating, paleography/typography, bindings, decoration, and illustration) to approach texts in a methodical, physical way, not only as carriers of theological content but as embodied artifacts.

Broader Audiences

Special collections teaching has also played an important role in more public-facing work. Examples of this include an NEH Summer

Seminar on Researching Early Modern Manuscripts and Printed Books (sponsored by the CUNY Graduate Center), which brought faculty from around the country to work in NYC-area special collections. In this context, participating faculty worked on their own projects, as well as developing their teaching with special collections at their home institutions. Relatedly, each year, the Interfaith Center of New York, located at the nearby Interchurch Center, hosts the NEH-funded Religious Worlds of New York Summer Institute—a month-long program for K-12 teachers from around the US. In this program, a “combination of classroom and community-based education introduces teachers to American religious diversity, helps [participants] distinguish between academic and devotional approaches to the study of religion, and gives them the pedagogic tools they need to teach about contemporary lived religion” (Interfaith Center of New York, n.d.). Faculty from Columbia, Union, Barnard, CUNY, and elsewhere participate, and teachers visit religious sites around New York City with a view to developing their own teaching of religion. Because the participants are teaching elementary, middle, and high school students, special collections don’t always play a role. However, one successful approach involved working with materials from the Council of Churches for the City of New York (CCCNy) archives—a large collection documenting institutional histories and charting denominational, organizational, and demographic changes—which fostered discussions of how the histories of diverse traditions and institutions throughout the city may or may not be captured, complementing the site visits and immersive focus of the program. It is also an invitation for the teachers to be reminded to utilize the special collections available in their own areas as resources for their teaching of religions.

In the World, Of the World

The examples here share a goal of putting students in touch with special collections in a sustained, contextually meaningful way that deepens their coursework and, it is hoped, their education overall. Having provided a survey of some experiences teaching with special collections, I want to conclude with a few reflections on lessons learned. Generally, it is clear that all are purposeful attempts to move beyond the “show and tell” model of special collections instruction

(and therefore not unlike attempts in information literacy to move beyond the one-shot model, where possible). They all focus on physical experience with special collections, not simply as illustrative but as embodied human artifacts, and placing special collections at the heart of the learning process. Though every library will be distinctive because of the particular nature of its collections and the communities it supports, the examples above may serve as useful reports of experiments that have been successful.

All forms of library instruction aim to help students understand and use the wide variety of genres, formats, and tools available to further whatever work they may be undertaking. They help filter the “noise” that arises from information overload and may help ground and focus the thinking and learning process. What so often flits across our attention, in our personal and professional lives, are decontextualized words and images. Librarians teaching with special collections have an important role to play in reminding students (and ourselves!) that knowledge—however conceptual or theoretical—is also rooted in the physical world and embodied experience and that crucial insights are lost when that is forgotten.

Libraries know that context is essential to understanding. Close work with special collections confirms that knowledge and ideas are mediated through the material—our bodies (which create and perceive) and particular forms (from vellum to silicon) that carry and inevitably affect their meaning. The study of content cannot be separated from the media in which it is contained, and historical and cultural literacy includes the ability to understand the “how” as much as the “what” of what is being written, said, or shown (McGilchrist 2009, 31 et passim). The dialogical nature of learning and research is potently underscored by special collections, not only in terms of ideas and arguments but in terms of the students and the collections’ placement in the physical world. We are, after all, embodied beings—a fact that many social, institutional, and technological forces may too easily allow us to overlook or forget.

We have also learned to pay better attention to what is missing from our collections, special or otherwise, and what stories they are not, or not yet, able to tell. The examples discussed here invite students to consider not only what is included in the collections but what is not, and why and which voices and perspectives cannot be heard and learned from as a result of both circumstance and deliberate exclusion. As we continue to build collections both retrospectively and prospectively, we are challenged to purposefully and energetically

work to include such silenced, overlooked, or excluded voices and to do a better job ensuring they are collected, preserved, and shared.

Special collections—apart, perhaps, from the earth upon which we walk—are some of the oldest things that many of us encounter. Many are also completely unique—a very uncommon quality in societies dominated by mass-produced, interchangeable objects. For better or worse, many can only be seen or touched in a particular place—a library or a classroom. Their very nature requires us to slow down and focus for a period of time. They confront us with the distance of past times, places, and persons, and of works made by other hands for purposes similar, or perhaps inexplicably different from, our own. A large part of the Burke Library’s mission is to care for and share its special collections with students. Whatever the specific goals for a course might be, in the humanities and social sciences at least (and certainly beyond these fields as well), special collections can keep the important realities of our histories and the embodied nature of all we undertake (even the seemingly most “virtual”) as vital to learning.

Perhaps there is a helpful analogy—all the more poignant in a time of pandemic-induced isolation and distancing—between in-person conversations and interactions and working with special collections. It seems that relating to one another through screens (in spite of the ways that this has been a lifeline for our teaching and other work) in no way approaches the important and meaningful realities of being in one another’s company, of having physical face-to-face conversations, of sharing the same places, of the engagement that can only happen through physical presence. Certainly the librarians, faculty, and students who regularly work with collections are missing those experiences in a tangible, powerful way. We hear this often from our communities. We realize both the value as well as the limitations of surrogates and other digital means of approach, as grateful as we may be that they afford at least some access and provide important support in a difficult time. Still, one could argue that this has further reaffirmed some of the important insights that those who work and teach with special collections have always known and tried to share: that knowledge, learning, growth, community—all the enlivening goals of education—need deep roots in the physical as well as the virtual, in the material as well as the conceptual, in bodies as well as minds.

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Endnotes

- 1 For most of its history, the Burke Library was simply the Library of Union Theological Seminary. In 1983, it was renamed to honor Walter Burke, a board member and generous benefactor of the Seminary.
- 2 Another large part of Van Ess's library had been sold several years prior and is now at the Huntington Library.
- 3 Slavens (1986, 25–6) quotes the University of Michigan's Justin Winsor's 1883 claim that, at that time, Union's library probably held the largest number of incunabula in the country.
- 4 Ivy Plus, whose best-known service is the Borrow Direct resource sharing network, includes Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, and Yale. ReCAP (Research Collections and Preservation) is an offsite shared collection located in Princeton, NJ, and includes Columbia, Princeton, NYPL, and Harvard.
- 5 The position of “outreach archivist”—a recent addition to the Burke's staffing model—indicates the centrality of teaching with special collections to its present mission.
- 6 It should be noted that Briggs's daughter, Emilie Grace Briggs—the first female graduate of Union (1897) and an accomplished biblical scholar—is generally acknowledged to have carried to completion his work on the lexicon after her father's death in 1913.