Handling Manuscripts, Incunabula, Early Printed Books and Facsimiles

Use cotton gloves to take a book out of a phase-box or out of the glass case. Place book on a flat foam block. Do not rest it on the table.

Examine the book first before it is opened.

Spines of early printed books were attached with hot glue made from animal hooves and when it was placed on hot it dried to form a spine that was not flexible. This created a fragile binding.

Have two large foam blocks set up for the book with a spine block between the two large ones. When the book is opened immediately the spine begins to bend. If one side of the text block has more pages on it, place flat foam blocks underneath the large foam blocks to raise it up. As the pages even out remove a flat foam block. This is to ensure that the spine does not bend.

The gloves can come off once pages are being turned. Turn a page by catching the page at the bottom corner and then hold the verso page with the flat of the hand and lay it gently on the opposite page.

Do not lean on the book or place any personal weight on the book.
Use snakes to weight down the book.
Use archival slips to insert as a reference into the book or to mark the last place read.
Do not use pens or markers near or on the book.

Do not leave the book open at one place too long. If one is going for lunch or a break close the book.

If a book is left open at one place too long then pages fade. Light damage is cumulative and irreversible.

When the book needs to be closed put the gloves back on. Keep the gloves when returning the book to a glass case or a phase-box. Close the book and return it to the flat foam block. If linen tape needs to be tied, tie the knot and place the knot on the fore-edge.
A book should be stored in an acid-free box such as a phase-box. A book should receive proper handling. There should be minimal exposure to light and inclement conditions.

When a researcher uses a book, let staff know if damage is seen on a page. Then a report can be made so that future staff and researchers know that x page was damaged on y date.

When a researcher uses a book and loose material falls off let staff know. Staff can write in pencil on a page corner which page it came from. Loose material is then placed in Mylar pockets and the pockets placed inside the front board.
Examples from Special Collections Used to Demonstrate Handling Procedures for MA in Old, Middle and Renaissance English

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- About the Collections
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**Key**
- Books are italicised e.g. *The Hobbit*
- Shelfmark / Call number # in bold e.g. **TR 912.4 ORDN Index**
- Location underlined: e.g. Range **28 Shelf 6**

**Contact Us**
Special Collections Desk: specialcollections@ucc.ie | 021 490 2282
Elaine Harrington, Special Collections Librarian: e.harrington@ucc.ie | 021 4903484
Research Collections Twitter Account: @theriversideUCC

**Useful Guides**
Special Collections: [http://libguides.ucc.ie/specialcollections](http://libguides.ucc.ie/specialcollections)
Theses: [http://libguides.ucc.ie/theses](http://libguides.ucc.ie/theses)
Archives: [http://libguides.ucc.ie/Archives](http://libguides.ucc.ie/Archives)

**Layout of Material in Reference Reading Room**
- **Ranges 1 – 5**: Material in monographs in series e.g. Studia Patristica
- **Ranges 5 – 9**: General reference material
- **Ranges 10 – 11**: General reference material folio-sized
- **Range 11**: Pamphlets & State Papers folio-sized
- **Ranges 12 – 16**: State Papers
- **Range 16**: Maps
- **Ranges 16 – 18**: Q-1 Journals
- **Ranges 18 – 19**: Almanacs & directories
- **Ranges 19 – 20**: Munster Printing
- **Ranges 20 – 21**: Bielenberg Selection
- **Ranges 21 – 24**: Torna Collection
- **Ranges 25 – 26**: OS 1st ed. Maps
- **Ranges 27 & 30**: Facsimiles of manuscripts
- **Range 28**: Hayes, Griffith's Valuation, UCD Folklore Collection, Listing of microfilm
- **Range 29**: Map cabinets
About the Collections
St Fin Barre’s Cathedral Library
The site containing St Fin Barre’s Cathedral has had a number of structures present. The first dated from the 7th century with additional works continuing to the 12th century. This building was damaged during the Siege of Cork in 1690. A new structure was built in 1735 and this remained until the 1860s. The current building on the site, designed by William Burgess, was completed in 1870 with additional works continuing for some time.

St Fin Barre’s Cathedral Library was founded in 1720 by Bishop Browne and purchased by the University Library in 1984. The private collections of Archdeacon Pomeroy (1725), Bishop Crow of Cloyne (1727) and Bishop Stopford (1805) form the bulk of the collection which consists of c.3000 volumes. The main subject areas are theology and ecclesiastical matters, but the classics, history, literature and science are also represented. Most of the books were printed in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, chiefly in London and Dublin. There are three small collections of pamphlets dealing with: (i) the Popish plot, and religious controversy, etc of the last quarter of the 17th century, chiefly English printing; (ii) Political and miscellaneous tracts of the early 18th century, chiefly Dublin printing; (iii) Irish pamphlets of the last decades of the 18th century, tithe war, economics, politics etc. The main languages are: French, German, Italian, Latin, Irish Gaelic, Greek, Dutch and Spanish.

For further information on the collection:

Material on Display
The text in this facsimile is similar to manuscripts.

This is the first major translation of the Bible. It was printed in Belgium in the early 16th century. The publication was partly financed by Jacobus van Meteren in Antwerp, whose sister-in-law, Adriana de Weyden, married John Rogers. The other backer of the Coverdale Bible was Jacobus van Meteren’s nephew, Leonard Ortels, father of Abraham Ortelius, the famous humanist geographer and cartographer.

Coverdale based his New Testament on Tyndale’s translation. He used Tyndale’s Pentateuch for the Old Testament and translated the remaining books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha himself. He worked primarily from German Bibles and Latin sources including the Vulgate as he was not a Hebrew or Greek scholar. 

**Gutenberg Bible.** Patterson, N.J.: Pageant Books, 1961. TRF 220.4 GUTE v.1 Location: Range

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This facsimile edition of the Gutenberg Bible has been published in the year 1961 by Pageant Books, Inc of Patterson, New Jersey and New York City, H.S.A. This is the first Gutenberg facsimile ever printed in the United States and the second in the world. The reproduction derives from the Ansel Verlag edition which was based on the copy in the Koniglichen Bibliothek in Berlin and the copy in the Standischen Landesbibliothek in Fulda, considered by authorities to be the most beautifully illuminated of the 47 copies known to exist. The text pages have been printed by lithography and the illuminated pages by sheet-fed gravure. The paper used is 100 per cent rag content made especially for this book. The edition has been hand bound in two volumes and is limited to 1000 numbered sets, of which 996 are for sale.

For the 1450s Gutenberg Bible capitals were put in by hand after printing and the colophon is at the end.

This is a composite codex preserving the unique Beowulf manuscript.

It contains the Southwick Codex (Old English), including four items: Soliloquies of St. Augustine Gospel of Nicodemus fragment; Debate of Solomon and Saturn St. Quintin Homily fragment.

The second codex is the Nowell Codex, comprising five items: Life of St. Christopher fragment; Wonders of the East (illustrated); Alexander's Letter to Aristotle Beowulf Judith fragment.

*Beowulf* is both the first English literary masterpiece and one of the earliest European epics written in the vernacular, or native language, instead of literary Latin.

The original dimensions have been reduced as the manuscript was badly burned around the edges by a fire and the edges crumbled. The loss to the Nowell Codex was worse because the width of the writing area is greater. In the 19th century the British Museum repaired the books damaged by the fire, by which time much of the text of Beowulf had crumbled away from the edges of the pages. By 1845, Cotton Vitellius A. xv. was rebound mounted on paper frames that help slow the deterioration of the edges of the pages.

The texts are: Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Aramaic (the Targum Onkelos), Ethiopic, Greek (the Septuagint), Hebrew, Persian, and Syriac (the Peshitta); editorial matter in Latin.
The Bible was one of the first books published by subscription in England, at a putative price of £10. £8000 was collected to finance the printing.

Use V.1 from each set as one has no front cover, but shows binding.
Point out the manuscript cuttings “approx 1200 – from the Book of Hours” that was used to reinforce the spine. 2nd set
Also point out the beautiful inside marbelling cover. 2nd set
Point out the maps, currency descriptions, architectural drawings, charts etc.
Look at the different languages used.
Look at the engraved signed portrait of Walton.
Look at the stitching used to bind
Look at the leather covers and gilt edging.
Look at the hand-drawn red borders.

Library has 2 sets. First set is bound in mottled calf with girt tooled borders and panels; parchment strips (MS of 17th century?). 2nd set is bound in brown calf with girt tooled borders and panels and marbled endpapers; v.1-3 have parchment strips: the horizontal ones have been dated to the 12th century; the vertical ones are 17th century). Condition of bindings varies enormously from excellent (2nd set, v.1) to terrible (1st set, v.[6]).

V.1 of 2nd set has the "Cromwellian" preface. V.1 of 1st set lacks all prelims before sig. C; remainder of preface is in the "royalist" version. On sig. C2 verso, at line 13, the word Thomas in D. Thomas Hyde has been struck out. And at line 21, the words "][Dom. Gaul]minus, eques, supplicum libellorum in Aula Magister" have been replaced by "][Dom.] Hardie, Linguarum Orientalium peritissimus" (printed correction, pasted over).


V.2 of 1st set has MS note on front and back endpapers: "Ex libris Jac: Cleland MDCXCI."

2nd set has MS note at back of v.1: "Septemb[e]r 20: 1673. I warrant these six volumes perfect, and if it bee returnd within seaven yeares after the date hereof (faire & not abusd) I promise to repay ten pounds. Ro: Littlebury."

The text block is very heavy for the boards. This accelerated the deterioration of the spine. The paper is good quality paper made with full rag content. This is easier to repair than early 20th century paper. The text block is sewn together with seven cord stations and laced into the cover but this did not matter as the text block was still too strong.

Conservation of 'The Polyglot Bible':
The spine was originally pasted on but insects ate it and the glue away. That’s why it’s so clean. The original sewing structure can be seen. The front board comes away. When conservation work would be done on this volume the spine sewing would be saved. The spine would be built on.

The front cover has already been re-backed. This can be seen in the bottom left corner. The corners would be reinforced. Then there would be several layers of acid-free endpapers as a barrier under the leather. All treatments would be reversible. The boards would have a leather treatment.
The Lexicon Heptaglotton was published in 1669 by Dr. Edmund Castell. It was published in two folio volumes. This was a lexicon of the seven Oriental languages used in Walton's Polyglot, and had grammars of those languages prefixed.

It took Castell some 18 years to complete the Lexicon. 14 people were employed at various times. He spent £12,000 on the Lexicon but there was little demand for the book on completion.

The first 44 columns have two columns to the page; the remainder, three columns to the page.

"Dictionarium persico-latinum, opera ... Jacobi Golii atque Edmundi Castelli," 573 columns, is bound before the main section of the work although called "Lexici ... pars altera."

Lettered "Biblia polyglotta. Tom VII & VIII" in continuation of the 1657 polyglot Bible of the same publisher.

Title in red and black. Engraved frontispiece portrait signed:"Will. Faithorne pinxit et sculpsit." Initials.

The Library has 2 sets. First set bound in brown leather; severe damp damage throughout; all boards detached and spines missing; fragments of old dictionary used as binder's waste. Second set bound in red leather with elaborately gilt tooled spines; damp staining; lacks portrait.

The Opuscula was first printed in Milan in 1488. The first Venice edition was printed in 1490. This edition was printed in 1497. A third Venice edition appeared in 1498.

The text is in Latin and the print is Gothic. The fore-edge have the following letters OPVS.T and la written above OPVS.T indicate the abstract of the book. The foreedge was placed facing out on a person's shelf. There is no red colour and no coloured first letters.

It is a median quarto, printed in double columns. There are 55 lines to a column, plus a headline. There are no page numbers; instead there are catchwords and letters to indicate the order of page numbers.

It is bound in paper and would go from the owner to the printer to be bound in leather or vellum. The paper is rag which was soaked in water and stretched. Wood-pulp paper is used from the 19th
century onwards and is acidic.

A phase-box is used for protection as there is no binding. The stitching is visible and no manuscripts survive which may have been used to reinforce the binding.

There are marginal notes.

The colophon at the back of book gives details of the title, owner, contents, printer and date of printing.

**Regensburg Fragment U.331** Location: Closed Access. Must be requested with one day’s notice.

Single leaf from a liturgical manuscript (272mm by 175mm), produced in the third quarter of the twelfth century (c. 1150-1175), by the Irish monks of Regensburg Schottenkloster, containing a unique record of the litany of saints of that monastic community, including some twenty Irish saints which identify the origin of important members of that community in south-western Ireland.

Since the fifth century the Irish have mounted missionary expeditions into Germany and the Schottenkloster are one early medieval offshoot of this enterprise. They were a series of Benedictine foundations which sprang from three Irish monks named Marianus, John and Candidus, who took up residence in the little Church of Weih-Sankt-Peter in Regensberg around 1072. A larger monastery was built for them by Burgrave Otto of Regensburg around 1090, and this larger and powerful institution founded others in Würzburg, Nuremberg, Constance, Vienna, Memmingen, Eichstätt and Kelheim. They had great influence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but went into decline in the fifteenth century, and as numbers dwindled in Regensburg in the last years of that century they were replaced with Scottish monks c. 1500-15. The manuscripts of the earlier house have all but disappeared now, and survive only in a single book in the British Library, a few fragments perhaps from there identified in the bindings of books in institutions in and around Regensburg, and the present manuscript leaf. The present manuscript leaf is the only piece which can be demonstrably connected to the mother-house of the entire movement (Weih-Sankt-Peter).

The discovery of any medieval manuscript of Irish historical interest is a sensation, and one might glance at the discovery of the eleventh century Psalter in a bog in the Irish midlands in July 2006 for a comparable example (although that, while of similar age, is barely readable and of a very common text, and the present leaf is both readable, presentable and contains a unique record). The present leaf emerged in a private collection in the UK where it has lain forgotten for many years, and was brought to Ireland with the permission of the owner, and exhibited in Glenstal Abbey last year in a conference dedicated to it, organised in association with the University of Cork. That event provoked a great deal of interest, and as part of that the monks of Glenstal sang the litany – the first time Irish monks had done so since the sixteenth century at least. Glenstal was a perfect venue for such a display, but is not the perfect home of such a piece. As the sole early medieval written record of the medieval Irish community in Regensburg, the leaf has much more to tell us than could be covered in a few brief lectures, and deserves to be exhibited in an Irish academic institution, and preferably one with a local interest.

The rarity of such an item hardly needs stating but we might add that almost all Irish medieval manuscripts have been collected into institutional holdings in the last three centuries, and no early medieval manuscript of Irish interest has, to our knowledge at least, been offered at auction since 1922.