

# Spring Activities in the Burnam Library

Latest news and bulletin updates at the end of the academic year 2022/23, April 28, 2023

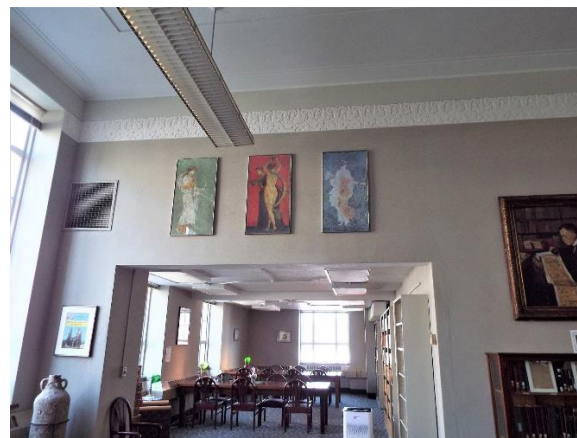
## Acquisitions, Digitization, Metadata, Book Tour, Exhibitions

The latest updates

During spring, the Library has as usual tried to come up with creative solutions to combat space limitations. We will soon start moving some Greek journals to which we no longer subscribe to the east wall of S4 in order to free up space on S5. As always, we have been acquiring [new books](#) (ca. 1,300 since January), with accompanying continual physical displays and online lists, which must be accommodated on our shelves. We have also added bistro tables, desks, chairs, lamps, and more to the physical spaces. Faculty and students who were around in 2017 may remember that the stacks areas were used as garbage disposals with broken chairs, tables, dollies, plastics, tarps, and the reading room with broken carrels and stained tables, 1970s chairs, the somber 19<sup>th</sup>-century portraits in direct view as you entered, no books, no table lamps, no flowers, all grey. Graduate students at that time called the reading room "cold and sterile," the circulation area "sad," and the stacks "creepy." It is not easy to make improvements without money, but after numerous trips to UC Surplus to pick up discards from other departments, and the librarian paying for table lamps for both the reading room and stacks as well as flowers and table cloths, and by introducing books, exhibition cases, removing carrels to open up the space to unimpeded natural light, by moving the portraits and bringing the colorful Pompeii fresco paintings and animals in antiquity posters (from our exhibition in Langsam) into the reading room, pictures of manuscripts in the stairwells, moving heavy reference books down from the mezzanine with easy access to tables, introducing wheeled tables for references look-ups in the stacks, laminated strips to enable users to see call numbers without lifting heavy elephant folios, subject headings to orient users in the stacks, a journal flip index, iPads, pencils and paper, lamps, bookcases, armchairs, etc., in the reading room, circulation area, and the stacks, the spaces cannot be thought of as cold and sterile any longer (BTW, we have appreciated the dinosaurs popping up in the stacks to enliven the ambience!). Technology in the form of two large wall-mounted monitors and computer were introduced in



the study room as well as a table lamp, plant, tablecloth, manuscript images, and a scanner and self-checkout were added in the circulation area, and the 100-year-old tables in the reading room and some in the stacks were refinished to remove cigarette (!) and coffee stains, and knife carvings (?). [See before and after](#) pictures. Continual water leaks, theft and subsequent security measures threw a wrench into our desired open-door operations in 2018. On the other hand, having virtually no security measures as before in spite of the multi-million-dollar collections made little sense. Good news this spring is that many openings in the ceilings in the stacks have now been caulked shut to prevent the books from further water damage and plexiglass protection has been mounted to block openings to the Rare Book room, which will allow us to use the room's entire space without fear of theft (ca. 70 rare books are still missing). Moving additional 19<sup>th</sup> century and unique or costly items to this room will free up space in the regular stacks. I am still working on replacing the ceiling lights in the reading room, having all wooden tables in the stacks refinished, and, above all, creating a papyrology/epigraphy room, similar to the scriptorium (palaeography room) I created in 2019, which seems to be appreciated by many, and which freed up space to allow us to transfer our 3,000+ rare books from ARB to finally integrate all classics materials in the Classics Library.



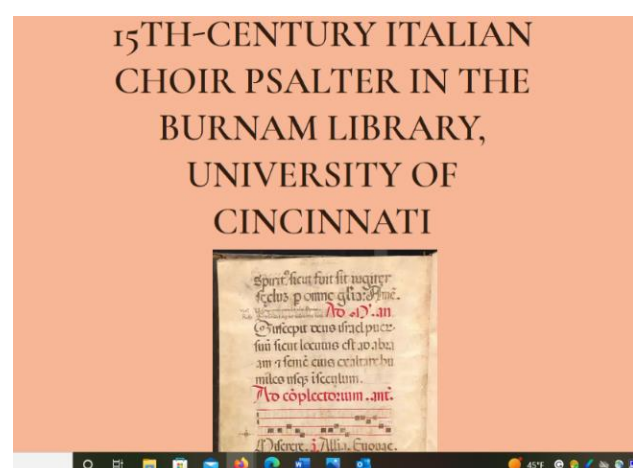
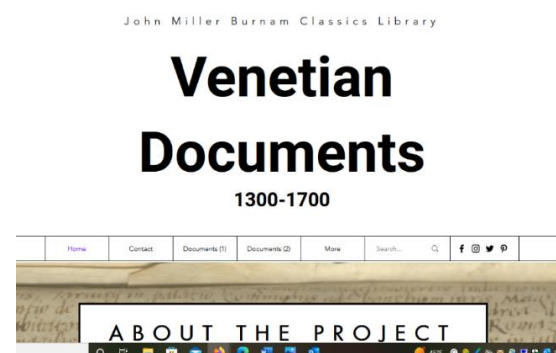




## Digitization

We have made great strides with regards to scanning some of the Library's unique resources in order to make them less hidden, to share them with scholars worldwide, to preserve the contents for future scholars as the paper copies disintegrate, and to elucidate the contents through detailed metadata. Thanks to a grant from the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation the ca. 600 (in 7 books) Venetian manuscripts (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.) have been scanned, and are currently being examined by Rolf Bagemihl, Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici, Florence, not KY, in order to add background, description, and, in some cases, transcription and translation (I just submitted the mid-point report to the Foundation). The manuscripts in Latin, French, and Italian cursive are quite challenging but contain fascinating glimpses into Venetian life during a time when Venice was a leading European economic and trading power. The nature of the documents is legal – wills, marriage contracts, real estate. Dr. Bagemihl writes, “through some records, one seems to glimpse hardship (the thatch and burnt wall in #44), but also generosity and kindness (a disabled person allowed quarters in #57; a dowry paid in cash when that was not strictly required in #77). There were many prominent and powerful families living in the Veneto area who are continuously referenced in the records. Many of the records regard the area around Treviso, and the nearby settlements on the Piave, and many regard Vicenza. In one group are a number of property records for the Venetian patrician family Da Mula. They were a “new family” in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, whose name is still attached to a palace on the Grand Canal, not far from the Guggenheim Museum in Dorsoduro. What is certain is that many of these documents offer a precious record of an area that is etched in Italian memory, merging national and local history, and for which little physical evidence has survived. They offer an equally precious reminder that cultural heritage everywhere is vulnerable to armed conflict.” It would have been easy to just continue to “let the seven books moulder under leaky pipes,” as Dr. Bagemihl put it. I am happy we didn't

and grateful to the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for their financial support to make these original manuscripts openly accessible and to have them deciphered, revealing centuries of colorful life in varied towns around Vicenza and Treviso, urban and rural, lower to upper class individuals and families, with a range of occupations, including official letters from the doge and fourteen wills, six of which are of women, several inventories of movable goods, a large cluster for the family and property of Vendramino Menegazzi, an almost unknown apothecary, and high-status marriages, e.g., of the Cerratti into the Dall'Oglio family. To learn more, see the [book tour](#) and the [Venetian documents](#) pages.



The Choir Psalter has been digitized and examined by Consuelo Dutschke, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Columbia U., and Christopher Platts, Assistant Professor of Art History, DAAP, and has been discovered to have belonged to the Augustine

order, identified by Prof. Platts, and probably the Franciscans earlier, identified by Dr. Dutschke, most likely in the Veneto area. Dr. Dutschke examined it closely before and after a stay in Sicily this spring and arrived at some startling and intriguing conclusions; for example, that the placement of the historiated initial was incidental and added after the production of the book, and that the one painted initial is of Peter of Alcántara, which I'm guessing might give us some clues regarding the acquisition of the missal as Burnam was a scholar of Iberian peninsula manuscripts, and that the scribe was a bad speller!

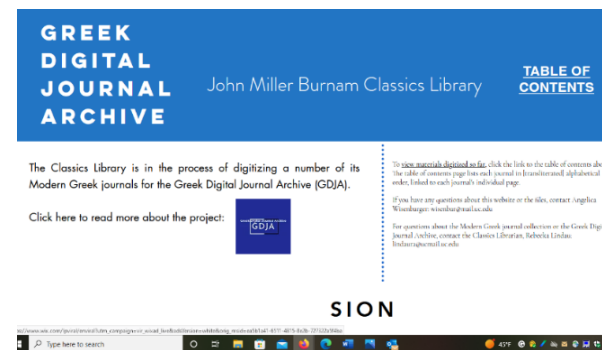
This spring, several of our Asia Minor maps from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c. were included in a digital and physical exhibition at Princeton University, curated by Prof. Richard Talbert, UNC.



Modern Greek journals have been digitized thanks to a UC grant and departmental support and provided helpful metadata thanks to Chrysoula Kakarimpa, Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, with additions by Tytus fellow Nassos Papalexandrou, and myself. These journals add to the growing [repository of Greek journals](#) linked to from the “Greek Digital Journal Archive,” which the librarian founded at an international conference she organized in Cincinnati in 2018 together with librarians at U. Michigan, Harvard, and the Tsakopoulos Collection at Cal State Sacramento.

**Keep your fingers crossed! There is some possibility that the extensive German dissertation collection (17<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> c.) will be digitized by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), with which I have been negotiating. Paper copies, in addition to being extremely brittle, were affected in one of the water leaks as the collection used to be shelved on S4 below restrooms on the main floor. I hope to have good news to share soon!**

The Burnam Library's outstanding digital consultant Dr. Angelica Wisenbarger introduced WIX, which is a web content creator and digital repository. This has been indispensable as we don't have access to another digital repository. It has allowed us to share links with Dr. Dutschke in NYC for an in-depth examination of the missal, allowed Dr. Kakarimpa in Brussels to provide detailed metadata for the Modern Greek journals, and Dr. Bagemihl in Florence to undertake an in-depth content analysis of the Venetian manuscripts. See links below.



## Links to digitized Burnam materials

Ca. 600 [Venetian manuscripts](#) (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.)

Ca. 45 [Modern Greek journals](#) (19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> c.)

[Choir Psalter](#) (15<sup>th</sup> c. northeastern Italy)

9 [Asia Minor maps](#) (19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> c.) included in an exhibition at Princeton; in addition to the ca. 600 [Mediterranean Map Collection](#) (accessed from the UC campus). From [off campus](#). See also [blogpost](#) for background information on the Greek maps. For a history and description of the rare AMFOGE maps, see Jack Davis's narrative in the [book tour](#).

## Karamanlidika

Two leading experts on Karamanlidika, Dr. Evangelia Balta, Director Emerita of Ottoman Studies at the National Hellenic Research Center, Athens, and Dr. Anastasia-Aglaia Lemos, Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Modern Greek Studies at King's College

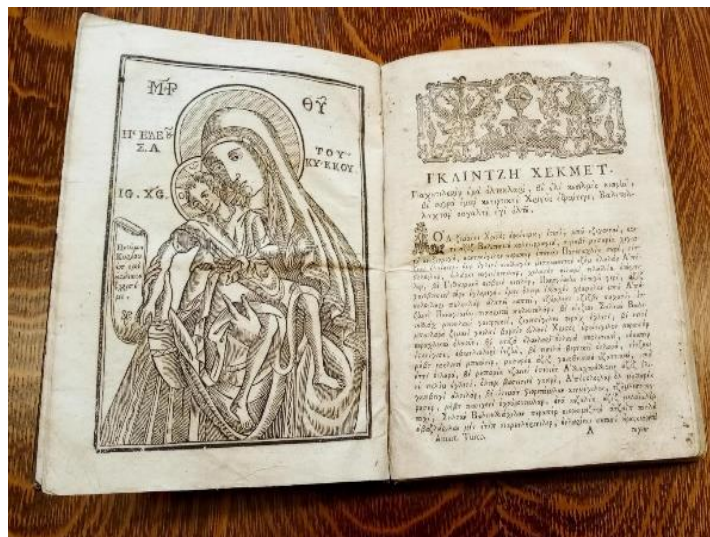
London have examined pages scanned from recently discovered texts in the Library, see [blogpost](#).

Anastasia-Aglaia Lemos's PhD research was on the literature of Greece and Turkey at the School of



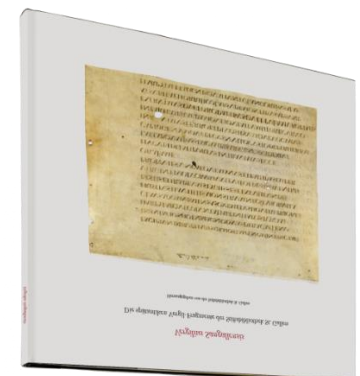
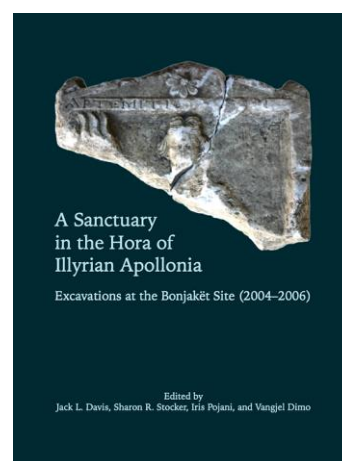
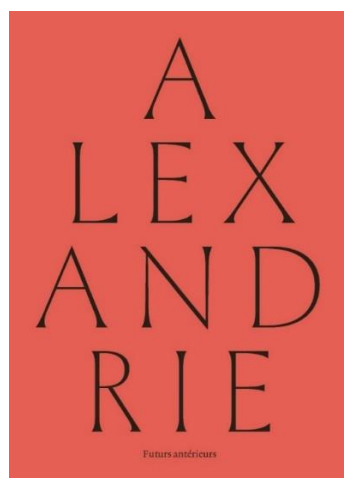
Oriental and African Studies, University of London, so she was the perfect specialist to handle this. Few scholars are fluent in Greek and Turkish, especially from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. We have the extremely well-connected Jack Davis to thank for the contacts.

We hope to scan the manuscripts during the summer now that we have accurate and detailed descriptive metadata. Once this is done along with some additional early Greek journals, we will finally be able to turn the scanner over to you all, which was my intention when pushing for the acquisition of this scanner in the first place



## Acquisitions

The Library has acquired some 1,300 items since January. Among these are rare items such as a book published in 1645 Leiden of Pomponius Mela's *De situ orbis*, an early work in Latin on geography, cited as an authority by Pliny the Elder; new items such as an incredibly nice smelling (😊) book, *Alexandrie: futurs antérieurs* (exhibition catalog, Brussels, 2022); and yet another book, which I have not smelled, by our own Order of the Phoenix recipients Shari Stocker and Jack Davis,



*A sanctuary in the hora of Illyrian Apollonia: excavations at the Bonjakët site 2004-2006* (Lockwood, 2022), and a beautiful and helpful limited edition *Vergilius Sangallensis: Die spätantiken Vergil-Fragmente der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen* (Luzern: Quaternio) with transcriptions and parallel German translation.

Moreover, we received book donations from an Albanian scholar and from the Greek American owner of "Ludlow Wines." Mike and I will shortly travel to pick up another donation, this time from a Bulgarian scholar of books in Russian and Bulgarian.

We acquired a manuscript leaf from an Italian *Book of Hours* from ca. 1475 (photo to the left), woodcuts from *Ship of Fools* (see further down), and calendar leaves (photos below) with illuminations of activities appropriate for the month on the recto and its corresponding zodiac sign on the verso.







During spring, meeting with classics, DAAP, and high school students and having them identify the activities and months, the students have been able to do so every time without the aid of the star signs. The activity depicted above to the left is of a man making wine, treading grapes, which is done in September in southern Europe. The verso (not featured here) depicts a woman carrying a scale (Libra). The activity represented to the right is of a man pruning, conducted in March, and the verso (not featured here) shows a ram (Aries).

## BOOK TOUR



Check out the new [book tour](#) where you can read about materials of special interest in our collections, including an introduction to Karamanlidika by one of the world's leading experts on the subject, Evangelia Balta, an analysis of the folio size Italian medieval Choir psalter presented by DAAP professor Christopher Platts, the Library's unique map collection by a leading expert on the topography of the Mediterranean, Jack Davis, who focuses on three rare maps, donated to the Library by Herbert P. Lansdale, which were drawn up to ensure free and fair elections in post-war Greece, Angelica Wisenbarger's comical reappraisal of her Facebook post on the Duodecimo 1629 Elzevir Edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the intriguing and fascinating insights into life in Veneto during the Middle Ages and Renaissance by Italian Renaissance expert Rolf Bagemihl, and more.

## Exhibitions

An exhibit this spring has featured books, posters, and artifacts telling the story of Jewish communities in Greece. Greece had for centuries offered Jews a refuge. Indeed, Thessaloniki's population was 68 percent Jewish in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Before WWII, Salonica/Thessaloniki (even referred to as "Mother of Israel") had a Jewish community of ca. 60,000, many of whom were killed at Auschwitz. Today, the community comprises ca. 1,000 individuals. Several items in this exhibition have been on loan from Steven Bowman,





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Professor Emeritus of the UC Department of Judaic Studies, who also lent us some souvenirs from Greece – a piece of a marble slab from a synagogue by the Athenian agora dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. with an inscribed menorah and palm leaf, the Vapheio cup and mini and a detail of the Ships fresco from Thera.



Another exhibit has featured the eternally popular subject of astrology with a 1739 edition of a commentary by Richard Bentley on Marcus Manilius's didactic poem in hexameter, *Astronomicon*, written ca. 30-40 CE. One of the many subjects discussed is the Zodiac signs' relationship to parts of the human body. This is also reflected in an illumination referred to as "Astronomical Zodiac Man" from the famous Book of Hours *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, created between 1412 and 1416 for the Duke of Berry by the Limbourg Brothers. The original manuscript is at Musée Condé, Chantilly. Included in the exhibit is also an image of "Zodiac drachmas" issued in Alexandria during the time of emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), possibly to celebrate the Egyptian great Sothic cycle, the point at which the star Sothius (Sirius) is equal to the horizon of the sun.

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## Dusty Old Books



## Library Fools

As you know, Mike and I like to poke fun at ourselves so the acquisition of an Albrecht Dürer "Ship of Fools" woodcut of a librarian dusting (useless) books, we thought was a most appropriate addition to our collections (although do keep in mind that the discovery of the Choir psalter occurred when I was dusting books 😊!).





Don't we all wish to return to the innocence of childhood sometimes? A third exhibit has featured children's books in Greek and Latin such as *Tela Charlottae*, *Cattus Petasatus*, *Alicia in Terra Mirabili*, *Ο Χάρι Πότερ και η Φιλοσοφική Λίθος*, *Winnie ille Pu*, etc. Great summer reading, even for "adults"!



Some of John Miller Burnam's personal books which formed the basis for the modern UC classics collections.



## Bookmarks and Tourist Info.

The Library has new and cool bookmarks, which will be available in circ. from May 2. Also, check out a couple of websites: [Classicizing Cincinnati](#) (especially, students and faculty new to Cincinnati for ideas of things to see if you remain in Cincy during the summer) and [Why a Classics Library?](#) (a few "simple" arguments to use when "explaining" the study of classics and a library devoted to it to non-classicists). As we do not ban books or ideas and as we celebrate differences, the [bibliographic guide](#) is expanding to include groups and ideas not always encompassed within classical studies, such as women's studies, disability, black classicism, LGBTQ, animals (nonhumans), etc.

## The Latest Breaking News

To give you something to which to look forward and a desire for the summer to be over fast, the Library is resuming its author celebrations this fall!!! This time undergrads will be asked to participate as well as some eminent scholars in the field! Stay tuned for details (co-organized by Prof. Prince and Rebecka).



## Happy Summer!

In spite of the dark times in which we live, we hope that you will have an **enjoyable and restful and hopeful summer** without your noses in books (or trowels) only! To quote Alicia: "Quid adiuvat liber in quo sunt nullae tabulae aut sermones?" (*Alicia in Terra Mirabili*, London, 1964, p. 1).