



Rare Book Reading Room,  
October 1962

## **MORTIMER RARE BOOK ROOM HISTORY** Barbara B. Blumenthal

In the fall of 2012, the Mortimer Rare Book Room marked the 50th anniversary of its opening in 1962 on the third floor of Neilson Library. An exhibition in the Book Arts Gallery, “A Room of Our Own,” was curated by Barbara B. Blumenthal (class of 1975), rare book specialist. In the spring and summer of 2017, Neilson Library closed for extensive renovations and reconstruction. All collections and offices, including the

Mortimer Rare Book Room, moved out to temporary locations. The re-named Mortimer Rare Book Collection is part of the Smith College Libraries Special Collections, which also includes the College Archives and the Sophia Smith Collection. This history, based on the 2012 exhibition “A Room of Our Own,” documents the Mortimer Rare Book Room in Neilson Library from the 1940s through May 2017.

My dear Miss Dunham:

Miss Weed, curator of our Treasure Room, gives me the following information about our treatment of rare books. They are bookplated and the accession number is written in pencil on the back of the title page. They are not marked on the back and they are not perforated anywhere. Books from the Treasure Room do not circulate except in rare cases.

Letter (detail) to Miss Dunham, March 17, 1938 (MRBR office files). *See entire letter on page 3.*

## Rare Books at Smith Before 1940

Mary E. Dunham, Smith College Librarian from 1920–1942, had a great interest in rare books. On February 14, 1939, Dunham addressed an Alumnae Council session, describing the work of a college library. A press release for this event notes that she spoke of the numerous collections in the Smith College Library and “of the treasures to be found in the Rare Book room,” a space created in the 1937 addition to Neilson Library, which she oversaw. Dunham also suggested that Smith would be “a most appropriate place for the development of a collection of books on prominent English and American women and their activities. . . . If the Friends of Smith College Library, which has been under

consideration for several years, should eventually be organized, this is a field that would repay a collector’s effort.”

Margaret Storrs Grierson, class of 1922, became Smith College Archivist in 1940. In 1942 the Friends group was founded, and Grierson was appointed both the Executive Director of the Friends of the Smith College Library—a group which has enhanced the Smith College Libraries, including the rare book collections, through gifts and donations from alumnae and others—and Director of the newly formed Sophia Smith Collection, an internationally-known women’s history archive. After her retirement, Mary Dunham corresponded with Margaret Grierson about their mutual

interests of Smith College, the library, and the activities of the Friends.

Dunham’s passion for rare books led her to explore the handling of these materials elsewhere. A letter dated March 17, 1938, from the librarian at Wellesley College, indicates that Dunham had earlier inquired about the “treatment of rare books” in the Treasure Room there. She was informed that at Wellesley: “They [books] are bookplated and the accession number is written in pencil on the back of the title page. . . . they are not perforated anywhere. Books from the Treasure Room do not circulate except in rare cases.”



Mary Dunham (Smith College Archives)

Books in the Rare book room may not circulate to students but must be used by them in the Library. Books of a value great<sup>r</sup> than fifty dollars or fragile books of less value but difficult to replace, may not be used outside the Library even by members of the faculty. Such books are stamped: This book not for circulation.

Detail from Memorandum on “Care and use of books” (MRBR office files). *See entire document on page 3.*

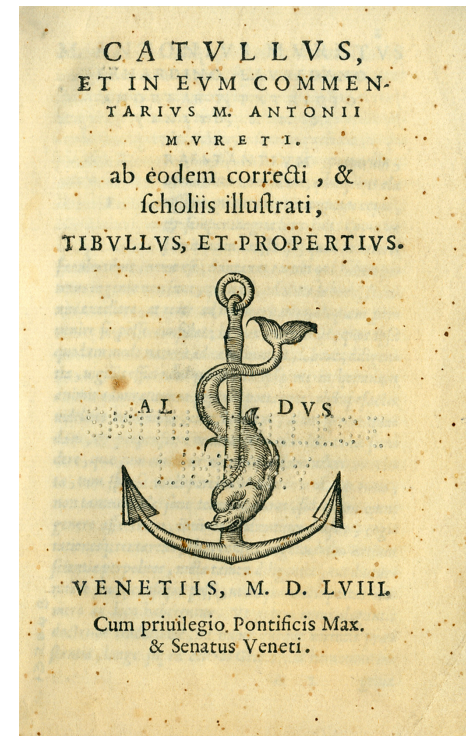
## Culling the Library Shelves for Rare Books

Marion Elizabeth Brown, a native of Ontario, worked in several Canadian libraries before she came to Smith in 1938 as an assistant cataloguer. During the 1941/42 academic year, librarian Mary Dunham gave her the task “to make a systematic search of the library for books which should be given special care.” These books, including fifteenth- and sixteenth- century items, formed the core of the present-day rare book collection. Brown remained at Smith until 1946 when she went to work in special collections at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

At the beginning of February 1943, Brown prepared a memorandum,

“Duties of the Curator of rare books,” for Sidney Norton Dean (1878–1943), professor of Greek at Smith. Brown stated that “work in the Rare book room is still in the developmental stage.” The list of six items indicates an ambitious program of investigation and selection of books from Neilson stacks, cataloguing items for the rare book collection, lubricating the leather bindings (a practice which has gone in and out of favor with rare book curators and conservators), helping students and faculty to consult rare books, and arranging exhibitions of books (although not exclusively rare books) in the main hall of Neilson Library.

Typed guidelines for the “Care and use of books in the RARE BOOK ROOM” stipulate that rare books do not circulate to students; however, it appears that some rare books (with a value less than fifty dollars) were available for faculty to use outside the building. The text also notes that the call number was not marked on the spine of the book, but typed on a slip of paper which was inserted in the book, projecting slightly beyond the cover (the method still in use at Smith). The part of the text which calls for perforating book pages has been struck through in pencil. A penciled note at the foot of the page, possibly written by Marion Brown, reads “Miss



*Catullus, . . . Tibullus, et Propertius.* With commentary and prefaces by Marc Antoine Muret. Venice: P. Manutius, 1558. Paulus Manutius was the third son of the great Italian Renaissance scholar printer Aldus, whose name and dolphin and anchor printer’s mark appears on the title page. (MRBC call no. 875.C5 1558)

Weed [at Wellesley College] considers perforation unnecessary. Miss Dunham [Smith College Librarian] prefers it. Advisability questionable.” Shown here is a 16th-century edition of Catullus with a Smith College Library perforation, which was used decades ago but not currently, to indicate ownership and to discourage theft.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE  
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

*Return to  
D.K.*

WELLESLEY COLLEGE LIBRARY

March 17, 1938

My dear Miss Dunham:

Miss Weed, curator of our Treasure Room, gives me the following information about our treatment of rare books. They are bookplated and the accession number is written in pencil on the back of the title page. They are not marked on the back and they are not perforated anywhere. Books from the Treasure Room do not circulate except in rare cases.

As I understand it, most of Wellesley's rare books have been gifts. It is hardly possible that the College could ever hope to sell them, even if it wished to do so. The terms of bequests would make this impossible. Under such conditions it is doubtless all right to paste in bookplates. We have no vault. There is a small safe in which a few manuscripts, incunabula, and other rarities are kept.

Perhaps you may wish to hear what my practice was at Washington and Lee. There, if a rare book was bought because of its subject interest, - Rashdall's Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages before it was reprinted - it was marked in all ways as usual. But if the book was valuable because of fine format or bibliophile interest, I put no marks in it at all except in pencil. A false flyleaf was tipped in and the bookplate was pasted on this. A string was slipped down the back of the book and a tag like that for a key ring was tied on the end of the string. The call number was lettered on the tag.

I have remembered with so much interest my visit to you at Smith. It was a pleasure to hear from you again.

Faithfully yours,  
*Blanche Prichard McCrum*  
Blanche Prichard McCrum,  
Librarian

Miss Mary Dunham, Librarian,  
Smith College,  
Northampton, Massachusetts

Letter to Miss Dunham, March 17, 1938. "Return to D.K." at top written by Dorothy King, curator of rare books 1946-1974. (MRBR office files)

Care and use of books in the  
RARE BOOK ROOM.

Books in the Rare book room may not circulate to students but must be used by them in the Library. Books of a value greater than fifty dollars or fragile books of less value but difficult to replace, may not be used outside the Library even by members of the faculty. Such books are stamped: This book not for circulation.

Books for the Rare book room are not marked with the call number on the spine. The call number is typed on a slip of paper, which is inserted to project slightly beyond the cover.

All necessary library information is written lightly in pencil on the page following the title-page: e.g. source, cost, accession number and call number. <sup>last blank leaf at end</sup>

\* Except in cases of books of exceptional value, the books are perforated (but not on the title-page) at the end of preface, final page, or where the perforation will least injure the appearance of the book. Rare book room books have book plates but no pockets.

Exceptionally valuable books may be marked similarly to the ms. Books of hours. An additional main card is made for the Rare book room file.

Students consulting books in the Rare book room, may not use pen and ink for any necessary notes.

\* Miss Weed considers perforation unnecessary. Miss. Dunham prefers it. Advisability questionable

Memorandum on "Care and use of books" (MRBR office files)



Eunice Wead (Smith College Archives)



Wead and Mary P. McPherson, class of 1957 (Smith College Archives)

## Early Book Studies at Smith

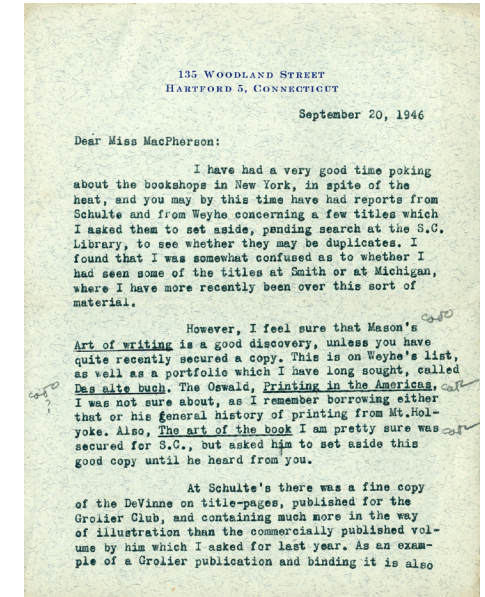
As interest in the arts of the book spread throughout the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s, a number of New England colleges and universities introduced the discipline to undergraduates. In 1939 President William Allan Neilson invited Helmut Lehmann-Haupt, noted bibliographer and curator of rare books at Columbia University, to teach a new course at Smith on the history of the making of books and books as works of art. Lehmann-Haupt made use of a collection of rare books that was then housed in the Browsing Room of the Library (not named for Neilson until 1946). The typographic and rare book momentum continued with an international conference on typography in 1942 organized by Clarence Kennedy, noted photographer, typographer, and professor of art, and in 1945, with the return to Northampton of Eunice Wead, class of 1902.

Eunice Wead (1881–1969) taught “The History, Technique and Art of Book Production,” as a visiting lecturer in art from 1945–47, utilizing original materials from various college departments (papyrus, clay tablets,

and parchment), examples of which are now housed in the Rare Book Room, as well as medieval and illuminated manuscripts and printed books from the 15th to the 20th centuries. Two letters reveal Wead’s preparations for her course. On September 20, 1946, she wrote to Mary MacPherson, Smith College Librarian, that she was “poking about the bookshops in New York,” seeking appropriate books to add to Smith’s rare book collection. She concluded: “I will try to get to Northampton some day next week, as I want not only to get all this book business settled, but also to set in order the many slides which the Art dept. has let me order for the course.” On October 3, she wrote to “Miss Johnson,” identifying desirable books from a rare book dealer’s catalogue. Margaret Johnson was the librarian at Smith 1949–1968; she oversaw the 1962 additions to the library which included the present rare book room.

Wead’s teaching at Smith came after nearly thirty years as curator of rare books and nearly twenty years as professor in the Library School at the University of Michigan. Soon

after her graduation from Smith, she worked at the Library of Congress for three years, first returning to Smith as a member of the Library staff from 1906–1911. Eunice Wead also visited in 1957, probably for her 55th reunion. She is shown here with Mary Patterson McPherson, class of 1957, who later served on the Smith board of trustees from 1998–2008.



Letter from Eunice Wead, September 20, 1946 (Smith College Archives)



Dorothy King (left) and Ruth Mortimer, 1952  
(Smith College Archives)

## Rare Books in Room 32

For more than fifty years after its founding in 1871, Smith College first used Northampton's Forbes Library and then a small library in Smith's own Seelye Hall for student reading and research. In 1909, a new main library opened, which has seen a number of renovations and expansions during the past century. In 1937 the first addition to the library (added to the north of the central core building) included space dedicated to the College Archives (basement mezzanine) and to the fledgling rare book collection (first floor mezzanine, room 32), sometimes referred to as the "Treasure" room. The rare book reading room was outfitted with glass-fronted wooden bookcases which lined the walls, as seen in the 1952 photograph with Curator Dorothy King and student Ruth Mortimer, class of 1953. (Ruth Mortimer followed King as curator of rare books from 1975–1994).

As early as 1947, fewer than ten years after the 1939 addition, proposals were made for expansion of the Library and reorganization of library departments and book stacks. In January 1955 Dorothy King

submitted suggestions for creating a new and larger rare book section on a proposed second floor of the Library Chapel in the north wing. Her three-page "Tentative Suggestions" outlines general needs—air conditioning, humidity and heat controls, adjustable shelves, entrances and exits, lights, and soundproofing—and includes diagrams of the division of the entire space. She proposes a reading room, exhibition area, and an office and workroom with glassed-in walls for privacy and for supervision of the reading room. King's plans called for keeping the present stack area for shelving of rare books. She also mentioned Room 32: "We consider the possibility of eventually giving up the present Reading Room and office quarters."

No renovations occurred in the library until President Thomas Mendenhall began serious discussions for library expansion in 1960. Dorothy King's thoughtful consideration of the rare book department's needs and her detailed layouts became the basis for the new rare book room in the northwest addition to the Library, completed in 1962.

Workroom (cont.)

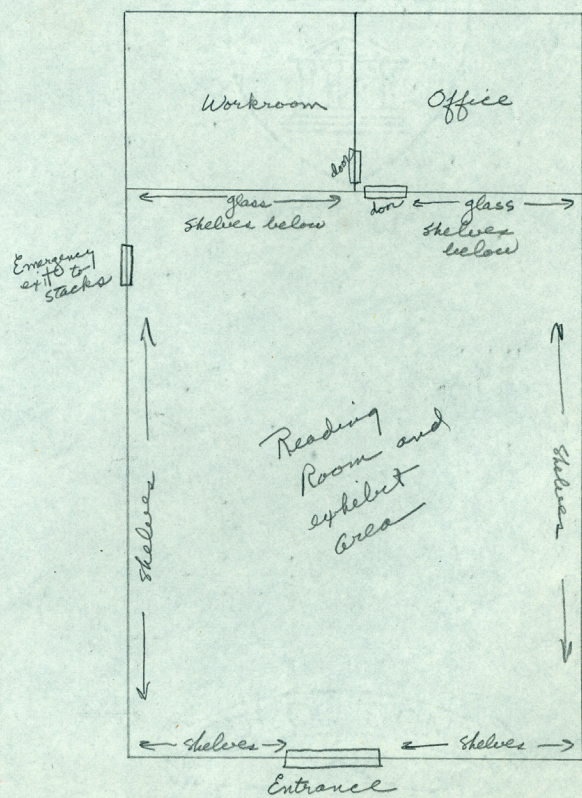
- Work tables
- Space for book truck
- Space for repair and oiling of bindings.

Stack

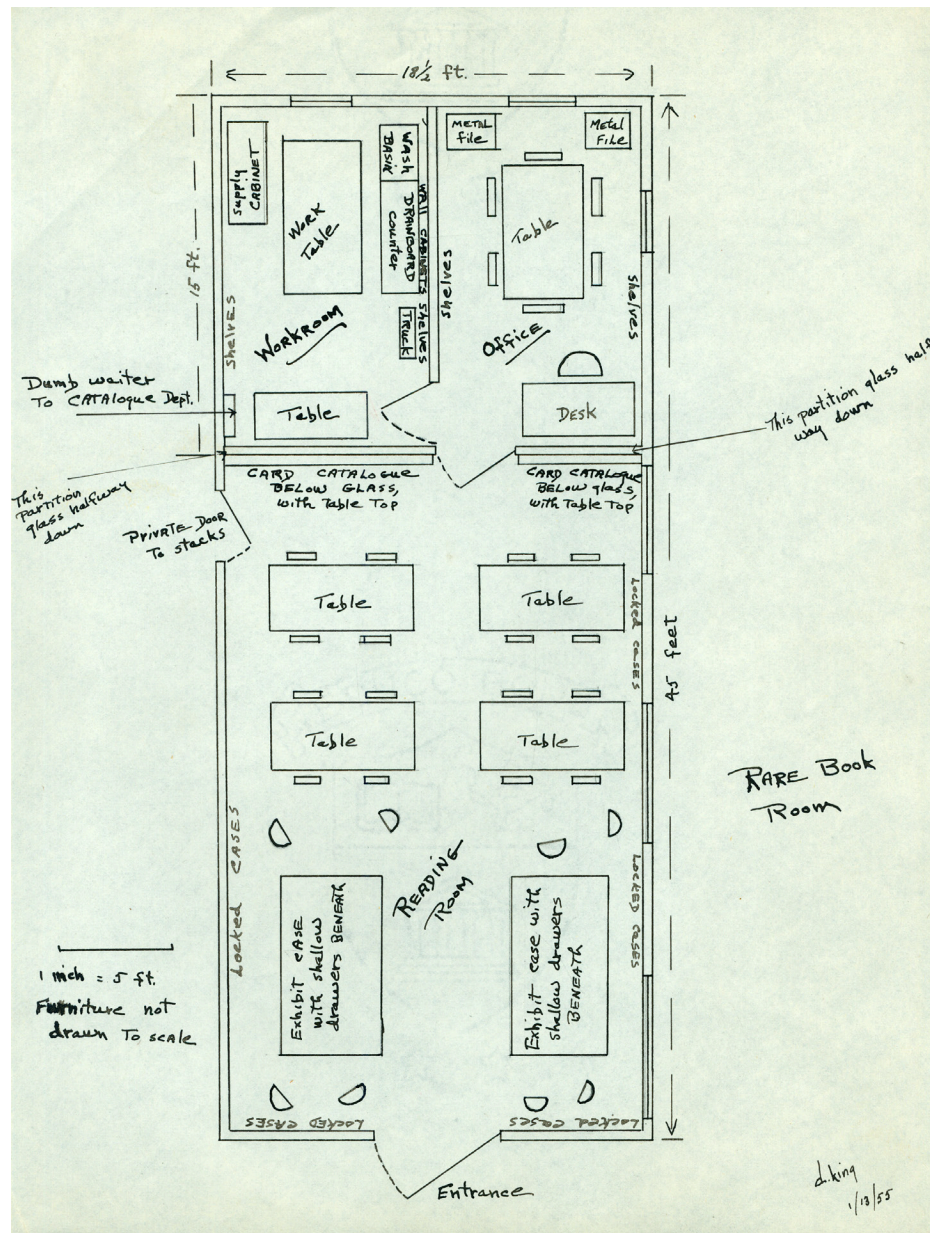
- Present stack area to be retained.
- Possibility of changing present wood and wire barrier to heavy grill

Room 32

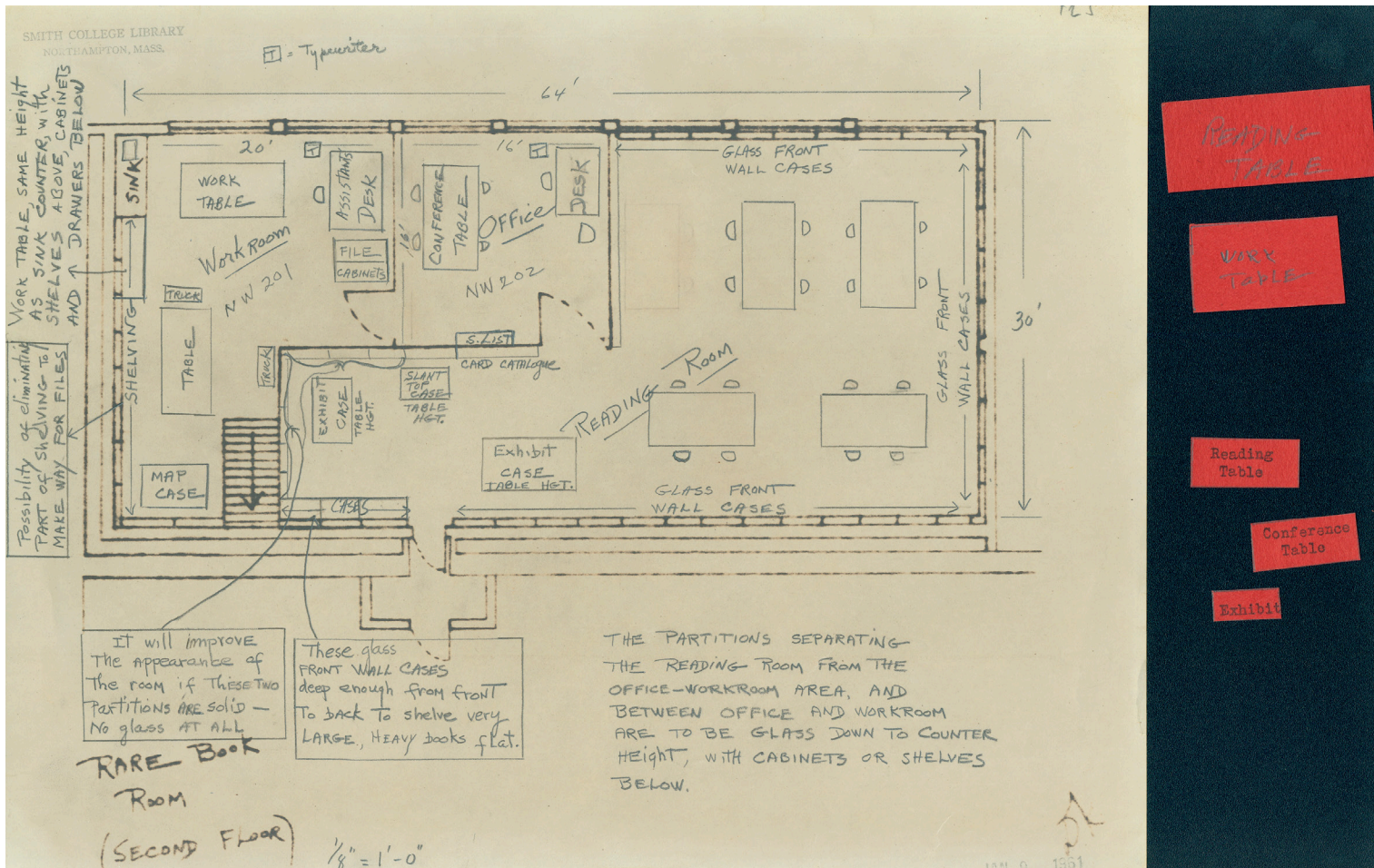
We consider the possibility of eventually giving up the present Reading Room and office quarters.



Dorothy King, Curator  
1/11/55



Dorothy King. "Tentative Suggestions for the Rare Book Room Quarters..." January 1 & 13, 1955 (pages 2-3) (MRBR office files)



Dorothy King. "Rare Book Room. Second Floor" (MRBR office files)

## Plans for the 1962 Neilson Addition

Dorothy King was intimately involved in the planning for the new Rare Book Room in the northwest addition to Neilson Library. Her attention to detail for the new reading room and exhibition area, curator's office, workroom, and book stacks is revealed

in her hand-drawn plan from January 1961. She also cut out models of pieces of furniture—in two scales—in order to properly design the new spaces. Her layout specified glass front wall cases around the reading room perimeter, spacious tables for patrons,

a glass-enclosed curator's office with immediate visual and physical access to the reading room, and a separate work room with large worktables and a sink. The rare book department space was built to her requirements and has stood the test of time, although

in the 1990s, new chair upholstery and carpeting were acquired, along with smaller reading room tables, and in 2002, the work room space was renovated.



## Fundraising for the 1962 Library Addition

The college's Development Office conducted a fundraising campaign to solicit funds for remodeling and "a much-needed addition to the Library." A photograph, which appeared in the Northampton *Daily Hampshire Gazette* on November 9, 1960, features Margaret L. Johnson, librarian from 1949–1968, and curator of rare books Dorothy King in the rare book reading room (room 32 in the 1937 addition to the library). The caption notes that the college "recently received a gift . . . towards this purpose." Helen Hills Hills, class of 1908, donated \$350,000 in memory of her husband, James Mandly Hills, for whom the northwest wing is officially named.

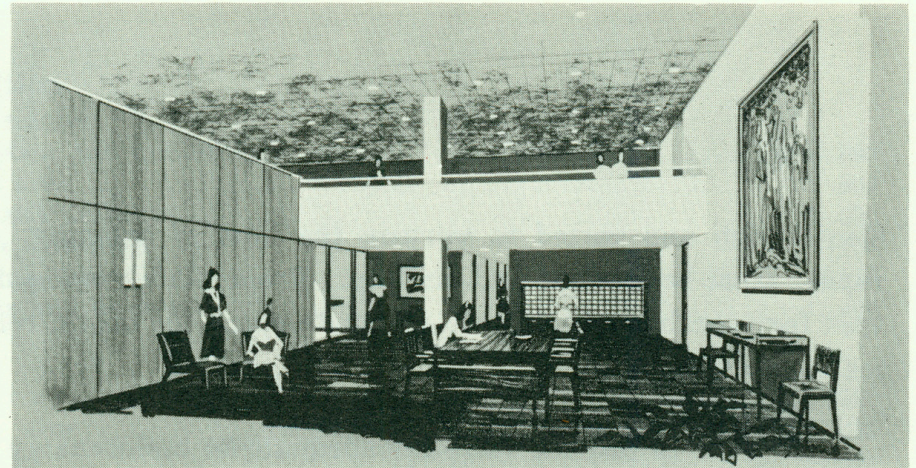
A new and improved home for Smith's special collections was a prominent part of the new wing. Johnson stated in April 1960 that

the rare book collection "is not a show piece, but one now being used, under almost impossible conditions, by faculty and students alike in work directly connected with the curriculum." The proposal called for a self-contained unit with one public entrance, a reading room, curator's office, work room with an assistant's desk, and adequate shelving for the collections. A November 1961 Development Office brochure includes an architect's rendition of the planned rare book room. It also depicts the new home of the College Archives and Sophia Smith Collection, which were located on the basement and basement mezzanine levels. One of the "Opportunities for Named Gifts" was the rare book reading room; this was furnished and equipped by Angela Shipman Crispin, class of 1908.



Left: Margaret Johnson (seated) and Dorothy King (MRBR office files)

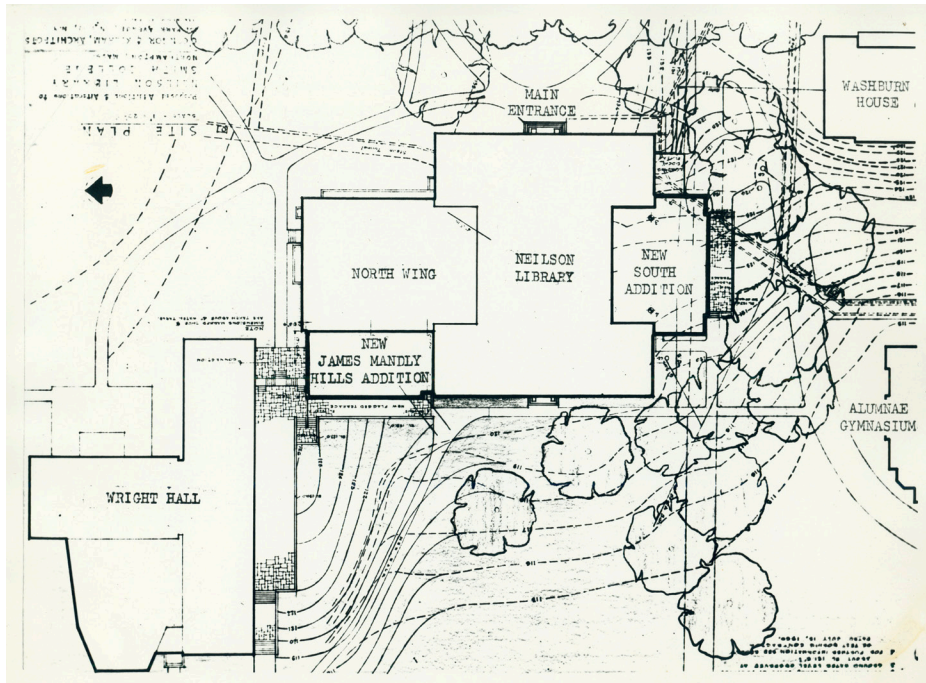
Right: Development brochure no. 6 (Smith College Archives)



*The Archives and Sophia Smith Collection, housing official records of the College and a collection relating to the history of women, will be located in the James Mandly Hills Wing.*

*The Rare Book Room will be located in the James Mandly Hills Wing being erected on the northwest corner of the present library.*





Site plan and photograph (Smith College Archives)

## Construction of the 1962 Neilson Library Wings

The site plan from July 1960, submitted by O'Connor & Kilham Architects of New York City, clearly shows the two small additions added to Neilson Library during 1961 and 1962. The construction photograph from January 1962 features the northwest wing, with Wright Hall (to the left) and the original 1909 library building to the right.

A later 1962 photograph (see page 10) shows Neilson Library with both completed wings, looking bare, before any landscaping was added. The Library's additions can seem haphazard and detrimental to the original turn-of-the-century architectural style of the main building. Also, since the northwest addition housed the library's special

collections, exterior plinths were built that partially block the windows in order to minimize light which could damage rare books and manuscripts. Today, these concerns can be easily ameliorated with UV-filtering glass and window shades. There was an outside entrance to the basement level directly into the Archives and Sophia Smith Collection, and the rear door of

the main Neilson Library building was still in use as a regular entrance and exit (currently only an emergency exit). The College Archives and the Sophia Smith Collection, a women's history archive, outgrew their space in the northwest wing and were relocated to the renovated Alumnae Gymnasium in 1982.



A 1962 image of the rear of Neilson Library by Dick Fish, who joined the staff of Smith College as a photographer in 1959. For many years, his office and studio were in Hillyer Hall. Dick Fish died in 2018. (Smith College Archives)

## The New Rare Book Room

During the construction of the northwest and south additions to Neilson Library, approximately 2,000 of the rarest books were in storage for about eighteen months. The new Rare Book Room was completed by October 1962, and the new wing was officially open. However, due to problems with the temperature and humidity controls, the rare book collection of approximately 7,000 items was not moved into its new quarters until February 1963. Fifty

years later, maintaining a consistent climate in the Rare Book Room is still an issue.

A photograph from October shows relatively few books in place in the new Rare Book Room, the curator's office, and the workroom. This image also documents the original color scheme of the reading room: lime green carpeting with chairs upholstered in purple, orange, and mustard-colored fabric. The large tables have been replaced with smaller ones to allow for easier

rearranging for class or individual use, the upholstery and carpeting have been updated, and the two exhibition cases have been replaced by a significantly larger exhibition area down the hall from the Rare Book Room in the core of Neilson Library. Yet, the reading room has stood the test of time.

At the October 19, 1962 dedication of the new library additions, Smith President Thomas Mendenhall spoke about the vital and central role of alumnae in the growth of the libraries'

facilities and books. He also said: "Finally, the special collections—Rare Books, the College Archives, and the Sophia Smith Collection—at long last have obtained adequate quarters in the James Mandly Hills Wing to the northwest which will now permit them to realize more fully their real value to a liberal arts college."



Rare Book reading room, October 1962  
(MRBR office files)

## Dorothy King, Curator 1946–1974



Dorothy King, detail from 1954 Smith College Library staff photograph (Smith College Archives)

*Dorothy King, Curator of Rare Books, died in Cincinnati on September 25 after a brief illness. She leaves her mark on the William Allan Neilson Library collection of rare books as perhaps no other Curator will ever do: she developed and cared for the collection from the time it was housed in a small caged area of the Library's stacks until it was moved to the handsomely appointed Rare Book Room which was built to her exacting specifications.\**

Dorothy King was born July 11, 1914 in Northville, Michigan. She attended the University of Cincinnati and in 1938 joined the staff of its library. She moved to Ann Arbor in 1941 to work as a cataloguer at the University of Michigan Library while earning her Library School degree. Her love of rare books led her to the position of Assistant Curator of Rare Books at Michigan in 1943. King knew Eunice Wead—professor in the library school and curator of rare books—in Michigan, and perhaps Wead—who taught book history at Smith from 1945 to 1947—encouraged her to apply to become the curator of rare books at Smith, a position King assumed in 1946.

When King came to Smith, she found that the previous curator,

Marion Brown, had left to serve in the Canadian military during the war, which essentially stopped progress on the recently-formed rare book collection. King proceeded to build up these holdings with great speed, taking the Rare Book Room from fewer than 2,000 volumes in 1946 to more than 7,000 volumes in 1974 (The present collection includes approximately 45,000 books and manuscripts.)

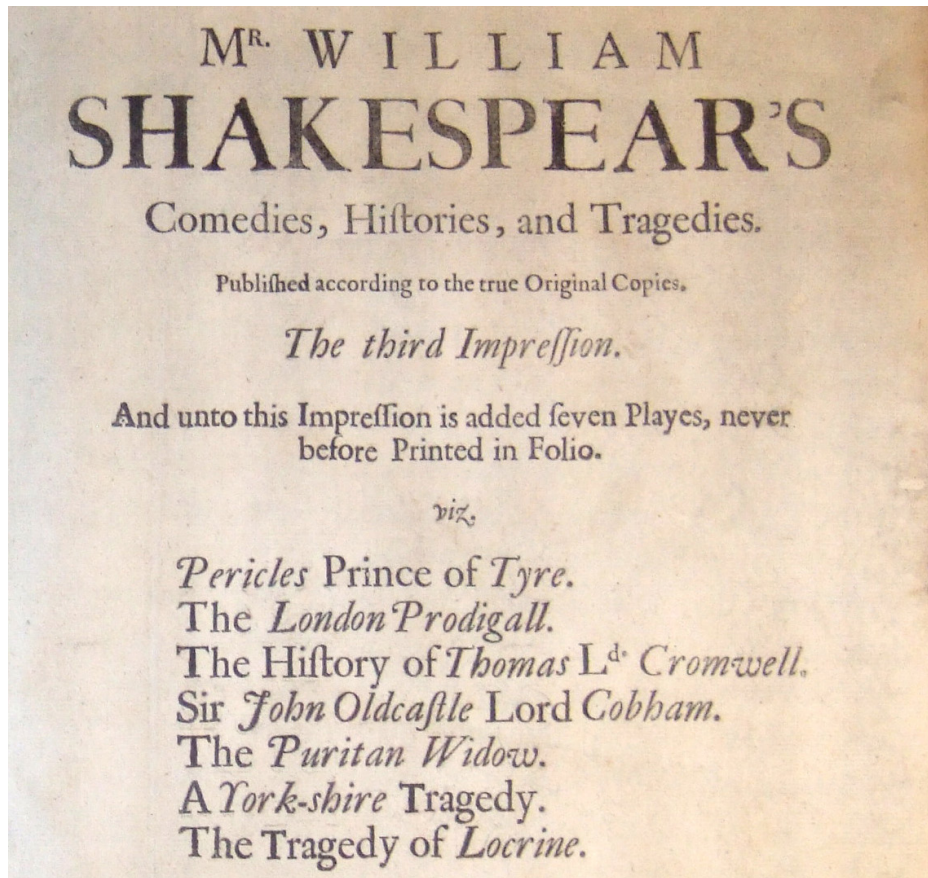
The closing paragraphs of King's obituary attest to her lasting impact on special collections at Smith: "She was particularly proud of the quality of the collection and that such major portions of it had come as gifts rather than purchases. Philosophically, she believed that a rare book collection is effective in teaching only if it is used and that under proper supervision and circumstances it can be used without damage or harm to the books. Miss King succeeded in creating a representative collection of rare books which have been and will be in the future years used to support the curriculum. . . .

"Her dry wit, her integrity as a bibliophile, and her enormous respect for Smith as an institution will live on in the room that she created, cared for and loved."



Dorothy King. "Notes on the Gehenna Press" in *PaGA* (Lunenburg, Vermont: Stinehour Press, 1959). King's interest in Leonard Baskin's private press led her to publish this article in the seminal publication, *Printing & Graphic Arts*. This is a woodcut of pomegranates by Baskin (MRBC call no. Z119.P9534).

\**Smith Alumnae Quarterly*, November 1974



## The Second, Third & Fourth Shakespeare Folios

In the fall of 1961 the Rare Book Room at Smith received three 17th-century editions of the works of Shakespeare, a bequest by Charles McCamic in honor of his second wife Elizabeth McCoach McCamic, class of 1920. A beaming Dorothy King, curator of rare books, is shown here with the three large volumes, joined by Janet

Adelman, class of 1962, and Charles J. Hill, professor of English. King wrote that the gift “adds a significant enrichment to the Library’s rare book holdings at this befitting time, when drawings for the new Rare Book Room are being completed. Probably no other work in the English language has received the peculiar bibliographical

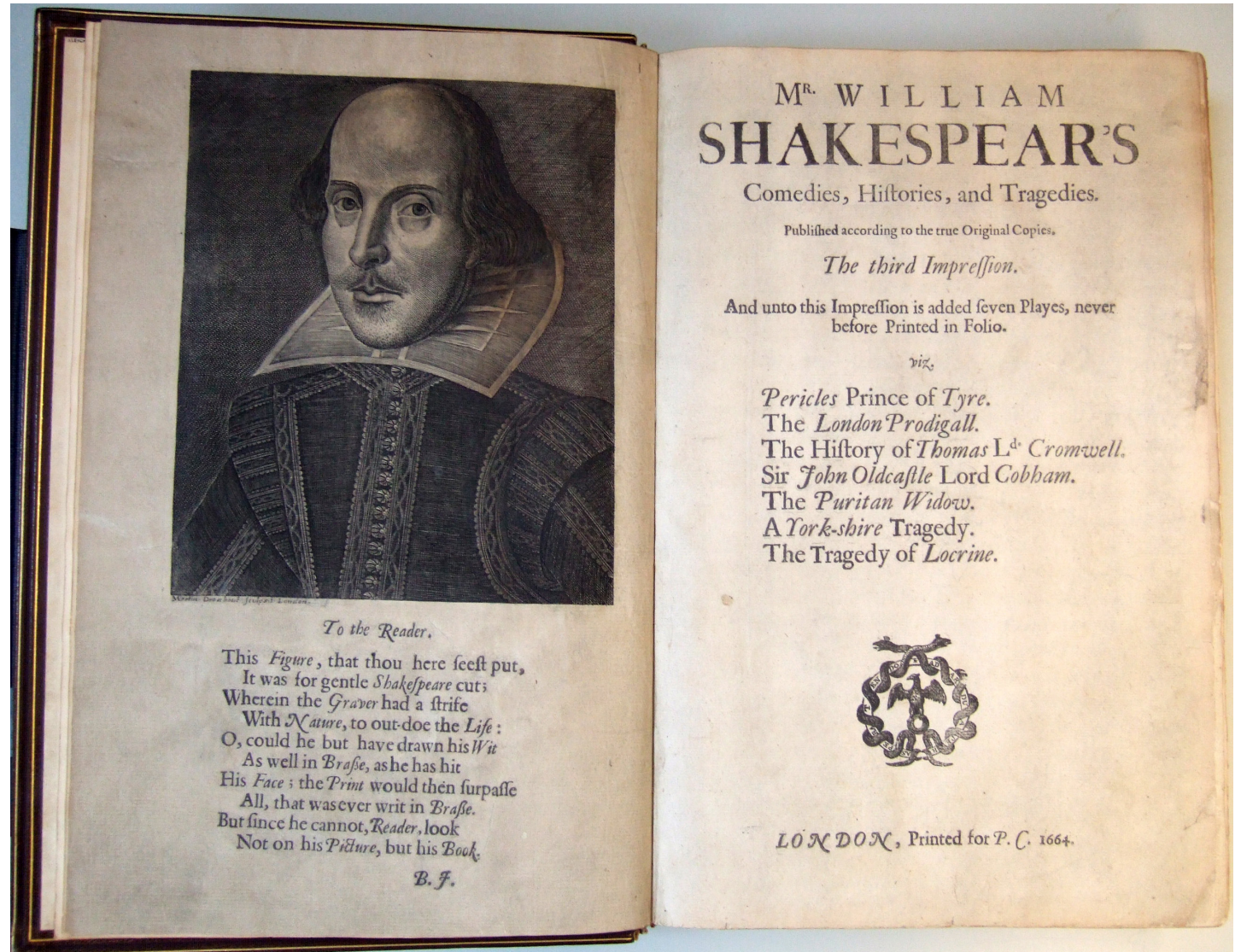
attention devoted to the Shakespeare plays. . . . This gift, for which Smith is deeply grateful and rightfully proud, opens a new avenue of scholarly collecting, in the field of Elizabethan originals, a field only briefly represented up to this time.”

Left: . . . The Third Impression. London: Printed for P.C., 1664. (detail) (MRBC call no. 825 SC 1664)

Right: Photograph, 1961 (Smith College Archives)



Janet Adelman graduated *summa cum laude* from Smith with an A.B. in English and joined the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1968. She was an eminent Shakespeare scholar and pioneering feminist psychoanalytical critic. She died in 2010.



The First and Second Folios of Shakespeare's works were printed in 1632. Note that the title page for this Third Folio states that seven plays have been added to this edition. However, modern scholarship has determined that only *Pericles* has any connection to Shakespeare. This book does include the famous portrait of Shakespeare engraved by Martin Droeshout.



(MRBR office files)



Katharine Leab

## Students Posed in the Rare Book Room

Northampton's *Daily Hampshire Gazette* of January 25, 1961, included this image of Dorothy King flanked by two Detroit-area students in the original rare book reading room. The student on the left is Margaret Anne Wilson, class of 1961 (died 1995). The other is Katharine Kyes, class of 1962. (died 2020).

Katharine Kyes Leab commented on this photograph in her speaker biography for the 2009 American Library Association Rare Books and Manuscripts Section pre-conference: "My introduction to special collections took

place [in 1961] and was immortalized in [this] photograph. We were marched into the Rare Book Room at Smith College, frisked for writing instruments, directed to sit at a table and not touch anything, photographed, and marched back out. Never touched a book; never turned a page; not invited back."

Yet, most of Katharine Leab's working life has been spent in "touching books and turning pages." She is best known in the world of books for *American Book Prices Current*, an annual compilation of auction records for

sales of books and manuscripts, which she has produced with her husband Daniel Leab since 1972. Mrs. Leab served as chair of the Smith College Friends of the Library in the 1970s; she relates that she "persuaded the college librarian [Billie Bozone] that she really did dare to ask the eminent bibliographer Ruth Mortimer to come from Harvard to Smith. Ruth revolutionized the Rare Book Room, welcoming students and using its resources to teach undergraduate courses."

Dorothy King did see herself as a protector of the books, even as she

aimed to make them available for teaching and research. Ruth Mortimer, the two curators who followed her (Michèle Cloonan and Martin Antonetti), and other members of Special Collections at Smith, certainly have made rare books and manuscripts more available to students. A primary goal of special collections at Smith is to teach undergraduates how to handle rare materials. The Mortimer Rare Book Room is not a museum of the book, but rather a widely-used collection of primary source materials.



## Dorothy King's Publications

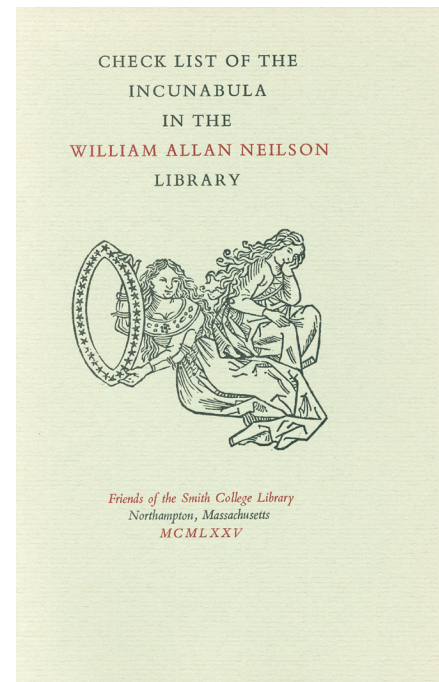
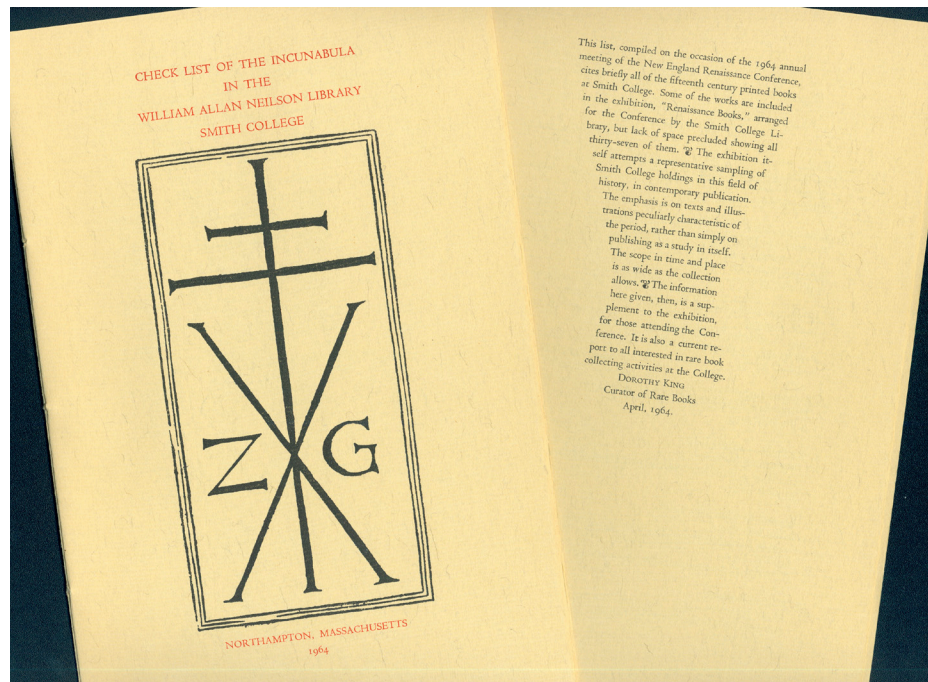
Leonard Baskin came to Smith in 1953 to teach graphic arts—primarily typography and engraving—thus enriching a ten-year tradition of book arts here. He also operated the Gehenna Press, his fine private press which he began in 1942 as an undergraduate at Yale University. Smith, quite naturally, has always had an extensive collection of Gehenna Press books and ephemera. Dorothy King's interest in the Press resulted in an extended illustrated essay in

*Printing & Graphic Arts (PaGA)*, a book arts journal published by one of the preeminent letterpress printers in the northeast, Stinehour Press. (An image from this article can be seen on page 11.)

King also compiled a checklist of the 15th-century books (incunabula) in the Rare Book Room, which numbered thirty-seven in 1964. The checklist—designed by Leonard Baskin and printed at the Gehenna Press, featuring his distinctive shaped

typography—was issued for the annual New England Renaissance Conference at Smith (attended by Ruth Mortimer). An updated version of the incunabula checklist was designed and printed for Elliot Offner's Rosemary Press in 1975. According to Dorothy King's obituary in the *Smith Alumnae Quarterly*, this was her "last contribution to Smith . . . to be published as a [Smith College] Centennial project by the Friends of the Smith College Library. Her meticulous research for the list had

been completed before she left for her vacation, never to return." One of Ruth Mortimer's first tasks as curator was to see to the printing of the checklist. Smith currently owns approximately seventy incunabula. Mark Morford, professor *emeritus* at the University Virginia and the Salloch Fellow in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, is nearing completion in 2013 of an extensive descriptive catalogue of these early printed works.



Left: *Check List of the Incunabula in the William Allan Neilson Library Smith College*. Northampton, 1964 (MRBC call no. Inc 1964).

Right: *Check List of the Incunabula in the William Allan Neilson Library*. Northampton: Friends of the Smith College Library, 1975 (MRBC call no. Inc 1975).



Ruth Mortimer in rare book reading room, third floor of the northwest wing, Neilson Library, circa 1980s (Smith College Archives)

## Ruth Mortimer, Curator 1975–1994

Ruth Mortimer made a notable appearance in the Rare Book Room Report 1951–1952: “The new assistant was a tremendous success . . . , we might as well deal with her here as a factor of substantial importance. Ruth Mortimer ’53, returning next year, fortunately, was particularly bright, willing, industrious, understanding, competent, and durable. She worked only five hours a week [starting @ 70¢ and later @ 75¢ per hour] . . . totaling 158 hours at a cost to us of \$117.60, and we are confident that it was one of the best \$117.60s that will ever be spent on this department. . . . It is very possible that she can assist with cataloguing next year.”

In her 1952–53 Report, curator Dorothy King again praised her student worker: “Probably the only reason that the gears didn’t just simply fly apart was the fact that Ruth Mortimer continued as student assistant and was invaluable in helping with reader service, to say nothing of lightening the work load right down the line. Her graduation leaves a big hole in the Rare Book Room program, and I couldn’t possible say enough to praise her adequately. . . . She left a mark on the Department such as is not usually made by nor expected of a student assistant.”

See page 5 for a photograph of King and Mortimer in the rare book reading room in 1952/53. Mortimer is holding the Cranach Press edition of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, one of many 20th-century fine press books presented to the library by Henry L. Seaver, husband of Susan R. Seaver, class of 1901. The caption on the photograph’s back states that “Miss Mortimer . . . plans to go into library work as a vocation.”



*The Eclogues of Virgil*. In the original Latin with an English prose translation by J.H. Mason & with illustrations drawn and cut on the wood by Aristide Maillol. London: Published in England for the Cranach Press by Emery Walker Limited, 1927. Presented by Henry L. Seaver. (MRBC call no. 879 V9e 1927)

## Masterpieces of Descriptive Bibliography

After graduating from Smith in 1953, Ruth Mortimer acquired a Master of Library Science degree at Columbia University, returned to work briefly in Neilson Library, and in 1957 began her 18-year position as Rare Book Cataloguer for Printing and Graphic Arts in Harvard's Houghton Library. The first of her two remarkable descriptive catalogues of the Philip Hofer collection at Harvard—*French 16th Century Books*—was published in 1964 (*Italian 16th Century Books* followed in 1974). Mortimer sent two copies of the two-volume *French Sixteenth Century Books* to Smith, one for the rare book collection, and an inscribed copy for curator Dorothy King's personal collection. King's thank-you letter to Ruth, dated August 25, 1964, is still in the Rare Book Room office files. King wrote: "I know you are proud of this magnificent publication, and you have every good reason to be. I think it is a remarkable achievement for anyone just ten years out of college, and it gives me satisfaction beyond measure to know that I have been involved in any way at all in your career."

King also commented on the Rare Book Room—the current one, which

opened in the fall of 1962—in use for only two years at the date of her letter: "This place is working out beautifully, in spite of all the annoying bloopers that are inevitably committed and perpetrated in new buildings. . . . I look forward to showing things to you." Dorothy King and Ruth Mortimer remained friends until King's death in 1974. Ruth Mortimer became curator of rare books at Smith the following year.

Miss King's 1964 letter ends: "I shall be using your book a good deal, hoping vainly to discover choice items at Smith that Harvard doesn't have!" One book owned by both institutions, item 115 in Mortimer's catalogue, is Charles de Bouelles' work on geometry. Smith's copy belonged to Ruth Mortimer and came to Smith as part of a substantial gift presented by her husband John Lancaster, after Ruth's death in 1994.

Title page from the first volume of Ruth Mortimer's catalogue of French 16th-century books at Harvard College. Ten years later in 1974, when the two-volume *Italian 16th Century Books* was published, Mortimer received solo credit on the title page. (MRBC call no. Z881.H436)

# HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT OF PRINTING AND GRAPHIC ARTS CATALOGUE OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

## Part I: French 16th Century Books

*Compiled by Ruth Mortimer  
Under the Supervision of  
Philip Hofer and William A. Jackson*

### VOLUME I



The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

1964

II4 BOUELLES, Charles de, 1479-1566.  
*De raptu divi Pavli libellus.* 8°. Paris,  
 S. de Colines, June 1531.

**CAROLI BOVIL-**  
**LI SAMAROBRI, DE**  
**RAPTU DIVI PAVLI LIBEL-**  
**lus, auctus ab eius epistola, ad fratrem In-**  
**nocentium Guenotum in Caestinesium**  
**monachorum ordine deo militantem.**

Eiusdem de Prophetica visione Liber.



PARISIIS  
 Apud Simonem Colinaum  
 1531

Colines's "Tempus" device (Renouard, *Colines*, no. 2) on the title-page. Unillustrated. Criblé initials in two sizes. Roman letter.

FIRST EDITION.

6½ × 3¾". Brown morocco, blind plain fillet borders, gilt on spine, g.e., by C. Smith, Beckford copy, with plate of Thomas Brooke. (John Harvey Treat fund.)

Collation: a-8, f10; 50 leaves.

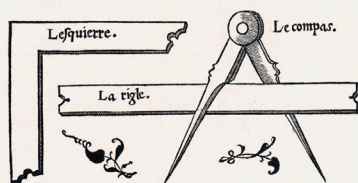
Ref: Renouard, p. 176-177; Beckford-Hamilton Palace cat., pt. 1 (1882), no. 1154 this copy; Brooke cat., vol. 1 (1891), p. 64-65 this copy; not in Brunet, Murray, Rothschild.

II5 BOUELLES, Charles de, 1479-1566.  
 [*Liure singulier & vtile, touchant l'art et*  
*practique de geometrie*] 4° in 8's. Paris, S. de  
 Colines, December 7, 1542.

146 BOUELLES

### Au lecteur.

**A** My lecteur qui cerches les mesures,  
 Et quantitez des lignes & figures,  
 Et de tous corps, par art de Geometrie,  
 Et plusieurs pointz & secretz d'industrie  
 Qui en cest art sont trouuez plus notables,  
 Et pour les gens d'esperit profitables,  
 Qui leur scauoir redigent en effect.  
 ¶ Auoir te fault ce liure, qui fut fait  
 Dedans Noyon par Charles de Bouuelles,  
 Qui n'est iamais sans faire' ceures nouuelles.  
 Entens le donc, & si n'oublie pas  
 Lesquierre droit, la rigle, & le compas:  
 Car de ces trois depend lart, & pratique,  
 Et le profit du scauoir geometrique.



Imprimé à Paris par Simon de Colines,  
 Lan de grace, M. D. XLII.

Verse address to the reader with woodcut of measuring instruments as title-page. One hundred fifty-four woodcuts, chiefly diagrams, in the text. The cuts on the last ten leaves illustrate geometrical principles in the universe and proportion in the human figure. According to Bouelles's dedicatory preface (leaf A2), the illustrations are by Oronce Finé, who also supervised the printing of the work. One strapwork headpiece. Criblé initials in two sizes. Roman and italic letter.

FIRST EDITION. The title is taken from leaf A3<sup>r</sup>. Brunet (I.1188) notes that this is a different text from Bouelles's work on geometry printed in Latin and French editions by Henri Estienne. For contents, see Renouard, *Colines*, p. 353-354. Augmented and reprinted as *Geometrie practique* in 1547, 1551, 1555 (No. 116 1555 edition).

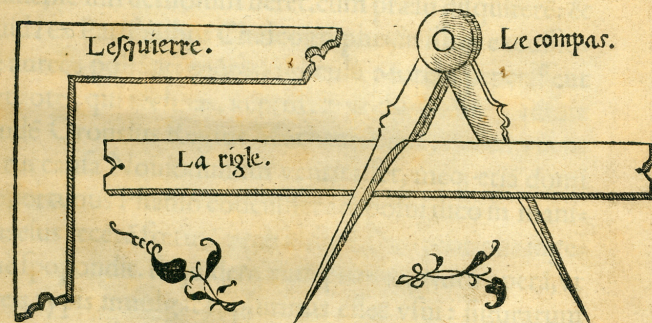
8¼ × 5¾". Modern calf, blind-stamped with borders in renaissance style, florets on spine, green edges, with a page of ms. notes at the end dated 1564-1568 and signed by Jacques Jamé.

Collation: A-G<sup>8</sup>; 56 leaves.

Ref: not in Murray, Rothschild, Brun.

### Au lecteur.

**A** My lecteur qui cerches les mesures,  
 Et quantitez des lignes & figures,  
 Et de tous corps, par art de Geometrie,  
 Et plusieurs pointz & secretz d'industrie  
 Qui en cest art sont trouuez plus notables,  
 Et pour les gens d'esperit profitables,  
 Qui leur scauoir redigent en effect.  
 ¶ Auoir te fault ce liure, qui fut fait  
 Dedans Noyon par Charles de Bouuelles,  
 Qui n'est iamais sans faire' ceures nouuelles.  
 Entens le donc, & si n'oublie pas  
 Lesquierre droit, la rigle, & le compas:  
 Car de ces trois depend lart, & pratique,  
 Et le profit du scauoir geometrique.



Imprimé à Paris par Simon de Colines,  
 Lan de grace, M. D. XLII.

Charles de Bouelle. *Liure singulier & vtile, touchant l'art et pratique de geometrie.* Paris: S. de Colines, 1542. Presented by John Lancaster in Memory of Ruth Mortimer, Class of 1953 (MRBC call no. 513 B6691 1542)

Harvard College Library Department of Printing and Graphic Arts Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts. Part I: French 16th Century Books. Compiled by Ruth Mortimer. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964. Two volumes. Presented by Ruth Mortimer, Class of 1953 (MRBC call no. Z881.H436)

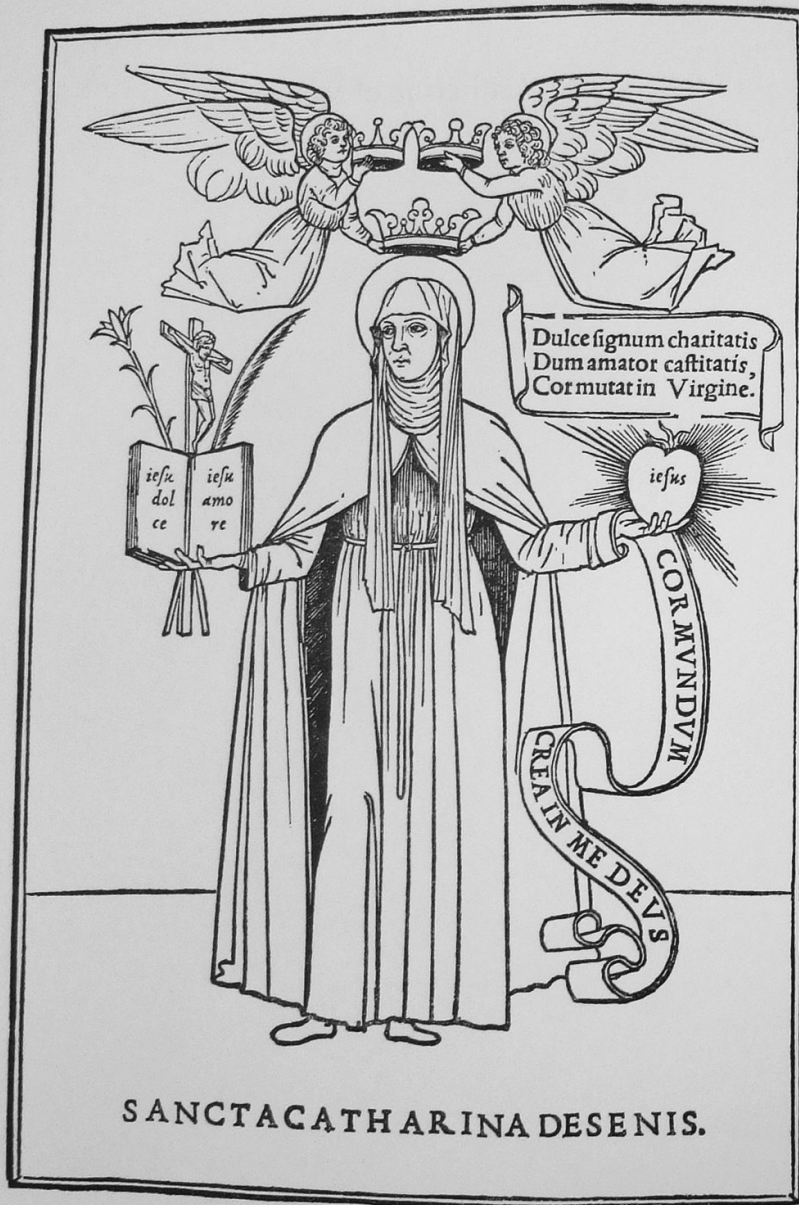
## Ruth Mortimer: Curator and Scholar

In 1975 Ruth Mortimer assumed the duties of full-time curator of rare books at Smith. During her tenure, Smith's collections of books and manuscripts grew exponentially both through gifts and with purchases using endowed funds, the first of which was established just two years earlier in 1973. Mortimer also negotiated for faculty status for the curator's position; she was a lecturer in the Art Department. "The Composition of Books" (Art 261a) was a trailblazer in teaching book and illustration history to undergraduates using original materials. This seminar was offered from 1978 through the fall of 1993, just two months before Mortimer's death on January 31, 1994. The Rare Book Room was named in her honor before her death.

Bibliographer Thomas Tanselle has noted that in the second half of her career Mortimer had less time for the sustained work of scholarship and writing that resulted in the Harvard catalogues. Yet, in addition to overseeing collection development, exhibitions, researchers, and teaching at Smith, Mortimer produced "a considerable number of exemplary essays, reviews, and lectures." Her

passion for iconography led to *A Portrait of the Author in Sixteenth-Century France* (1980), and to a posthumously published monograph on printed Italian sixteenth-century portraits. Ruth Mortimer noted that the portrait of St. Catherine of Siena shown here is "of special interest for students of typography rather than iconography" because the printed words on the book and on the heart mark the first appearance of the publisher Aldus' new italic type.

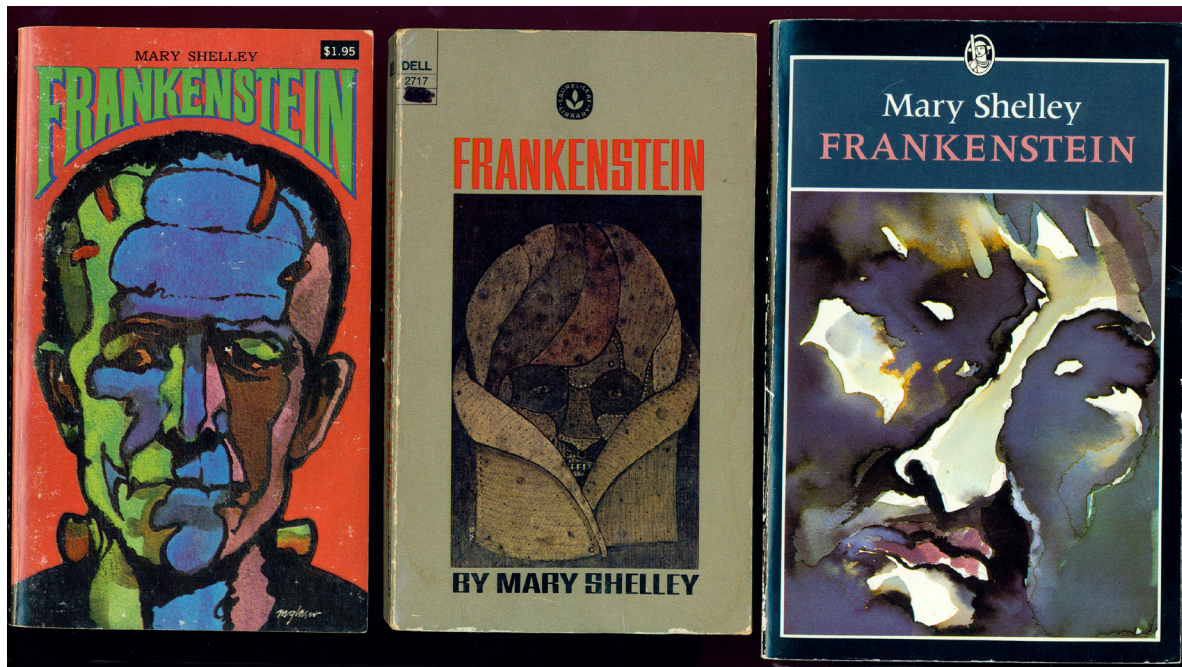
Ruth Mortimer had interests beyond the Renaissance. She collected letters and verses by the Victorian writer Harriet Prescott Spofford (now in Smith's manuscript collections). She was particularly intrigued by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; in 1976 she acquired a three-volume first edition (printed in 1818) for Smith. She wrote "Frankenstein: A Publishing History," one of four essays printed in the 1983 Pennyroyal Press edition of *Frankenstein*, and she amassed her own collection of modern editions of the novel, many of them illustrated paperbacks. Her *Frankenstein* collection of books and ephemera, now in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, is used extensively by classes here.



Ruth Mortimer. *The Author's Image: Italian Sixteenth-Century Printed Portraits*. With an introduction by G. Thomas Tanselle. In *Harvard Library Bulletin*. Summer 1996. Presented by John Lancaster. Smith College owns a copy of the 1500 Aldus Manutius edition of the letters of St. Catherine, which features this author portrait. (MRBC call no. Inc C-281)

chm  
 609  
 22/24  
 Flag Song.  
 air: Yankee Doodle.  
 Out upon the four winds blow,  
 Tell the world your story, —  
 Thrice in hearts' blood dipped before  
 They called your name Old Glory!  
 Stream, Old Glory, stream on high,  
 Bear your stars among the seven,  
 Stream a watchfire on the dark,  
 And make a sign in heaven!  
 Mighty harvests gild your plains,  
 Mighty rivers bear them,  
 Symbol of good: will you bid  
 All the hungry share them.  
 Blooms the wilderness for you,  
 Boundless plenty follows after,  
 Underneath your shadow so  
 Peace and love and laughter.

Harriet Elizabeth Prescott Spofford. Autograph letter, 24 May 1894, to Mr. Bowen. With "Flag Song," verses written to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*. Mrs. Spofford wrote these verses for the July 4th celebration at Roseland Cottage in Woodstock, Connecticut. The Gothic revival cottage was built in 1846 for Henry Chandler Bowen as a summer home and is now operated as a museum. Presented by John Lancaster. (MRBC call no. MS 252)



Above: Mary W. Shelley. *Frankenstein*. Paperback editions published in 1961, 1973, and 1985. Presented By Ruth Mortimer, Class of 1953. (MRBC call no. PR5397.F7)



Left: Bronze cast of artist Barry Moser's hand for the 1983 Pennyroyal Press *Frankenstein*

## The Dedication of the Mortimer Rare Book Room

Shortly before the death of Ruth Mortimer in January 1994, the Smith College Board of Trustees voted to name the Rare Book Room in her honor. A dedication took place on April 23, organized by Karen Kukil, acting curator of rare books. The dedication featured readings, speakers, a musical performance, and reception. A plaque was unveiled, designed by former library assistant Sarah Black.

The dedication keepsake included a poem by James Sacré in honor of Ruth Mortimer, translated into English by David Ball; a commemorative bookmark; and a text from *Siena* by

Swinburne, hand-set and printed by students in Mortimer's course, Art 261a, in the fall of 1993, and reprinted for the dedication. The keepsake folder featured a gold-stamped hand and book from a portrait of St. Catherine of Siena in her *Epistole devotissime* of 1501, the book chosen by Ruth Mortimer for the rare book collection as the millionth volume acquired by the Smith College Libraries.

Ruth Mortimer's legacy at Smith is ensured by the rare book collection she built and by her commitment to teaching and scholarship. In addition, her husband John Lancaster

established the Ruth Mortimer Rare Book Room Fund, an endowed fund which is used to support exhibitions, publications, and other educational programs that promote Smith's rare book collections and encourage undergraduate use of the Mortimer Rare Book Room. Mortimer also encouraged the establishment of the Smith College Library Staff Seminar, an annual gathering of Smith library colleagues in the MRBR to honor Ruth's memory with edifying programs and refreshments.



Left: John Lancaster, Karen Kukil, and Smith College Librarian Sarah Pritchard, with MRBR plaque, April 23, 1994

Right: Mortimer Rare Book Room Dedication bookmark

THE  
MORTIMER  
RARE BOOK ROOM

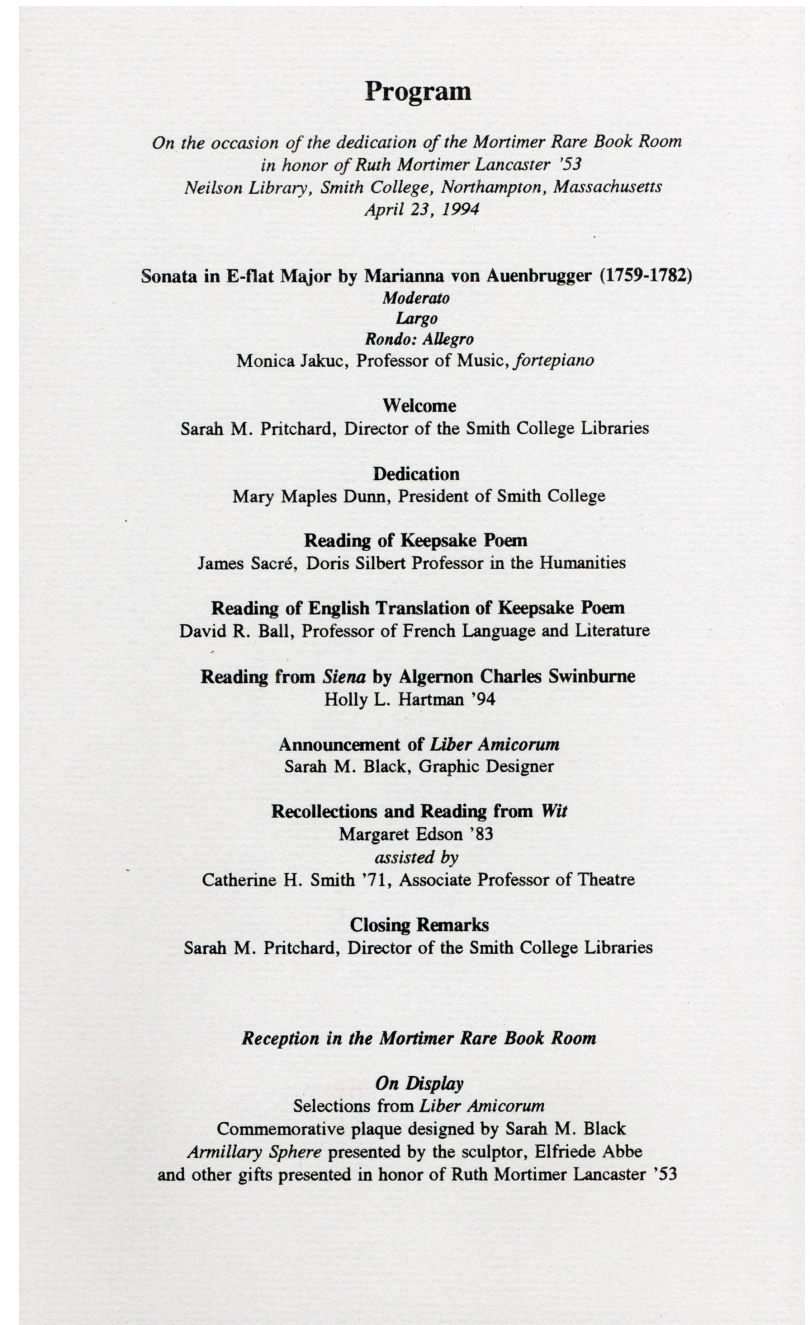
*in honor of*  
Ruth Mortimer Lancaster '53  
Curator of Rare Books  
1975-1994

DEDICATION  
APRIL 23, 1994

SMITH COLLEGE



Dedication program folder, bookmark, and keepsake poem by Swinburne (400 copies printed by Harold P. McGrath on the occasion of the dedication of the Mortimer Rare Book Room), April 23, 1994



Mortimer Rare Book Room Dedication Program, April 23, 1994



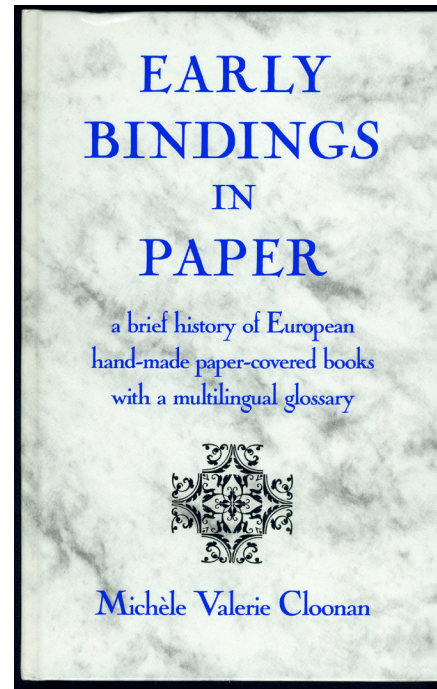


Michèle V. Cloonan

## Michèle Cloonan, Curator 1995–1996

After Ruth Mortimer's death at the end of January 1994, assistant curator Karen Kukil served as interim curator of rare books until the arrival of Michèle Cloonan in August 1995. Cloonan brought a fresh perspective to some procedures in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, and she continued Ruth Mortimer's tradition of teaching undergraduates using original materials from the collection.

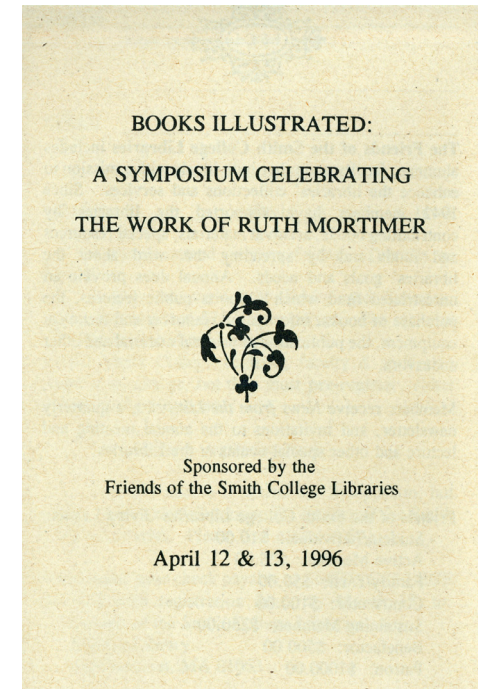
Cloonan organized "Books Illustrated," a two-day symposium in 1996, honoring Ruth Mortimer's work at Smith as a curator, teacher, and collector. The program included presentations in areas of particular interest to Mortimer by longtime friends and former colleagues. An exhibition, "Speakers Illustrated," highlighted the work of all participants in the symposium. A keepsake featured



*Early Bindings in Paper* by Michèle Valerie Cloonan, 1991 (MRBC call no. Ref. Z269.3.P37 C57 1991)

three haiku written by Mortimer and an origami crane, both housed in a box covered with paste papers made by Elisabeth Hyder of Brookfield, MA. A printed booklet collected highlights of individual speakers' talks and panel discussions.

Michèle Cloonan, a graduate of Bennington College, has an M.S. and a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science (LIS) and has served as

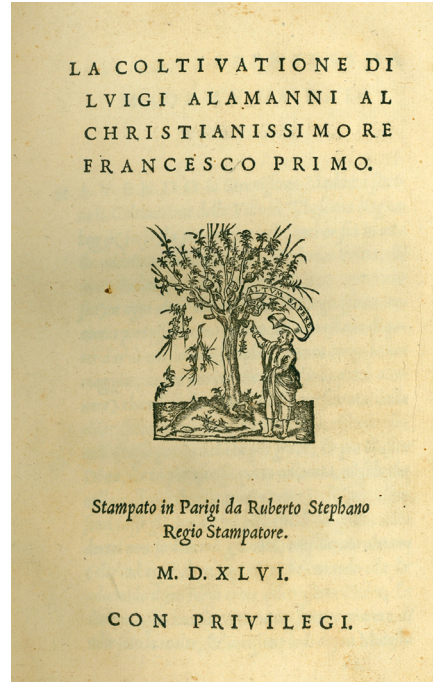
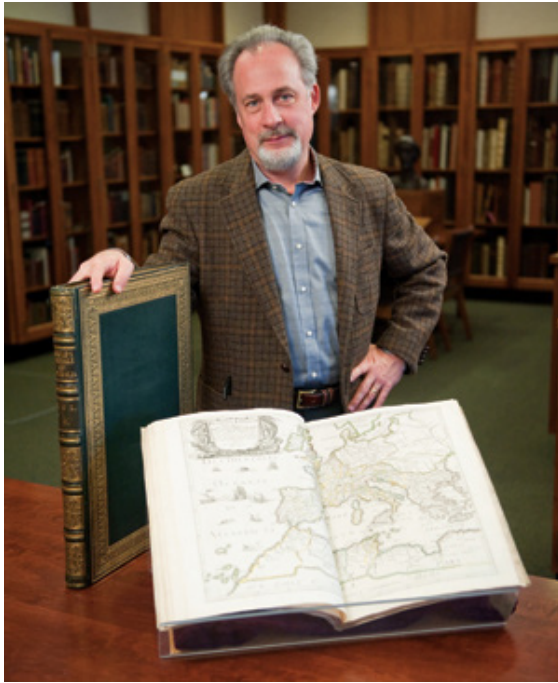


Program (detail) for "Books Illustrated" symposium, designed by Barbara Blumenthal

preservation officer at Brown University and professor in the UCLA Department of LIS. Currently she is Dean and Professor at the Simmons College Graduate School of LIS in Boston. Her graduate work on paper bindings led to a book on the history of European handmade paper-covered books. She is active in various professional library and conservation organizations.



Keepsake for Dedication of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, April 1994. Haiku by Ruth Mortimer; hatbox covered with paste paper by Elisabeth Hyder; hand-folded origami crane



Far left: Martin Antonetti in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, circa 2009. Book on left: John Gould. *The Mammals of Australia*. London: J. Gould, 1863 (MRBC call no. QL733.G7 1863). Open book: Nicolas Sanson. *Romani utriusque Imperii Orientis scilicet et Occidentis descriptio...* Paris: M. Ravernier, 1638 (MRBC call no. G1033.S26 1638). Photograph by Jim Gipe.

Left: Luigi Alamanni. *La coltivazione*. Paris: Robert Estienne, 1546. Purchased on the Fund Established in Memory of Elizabeth McConnell, Class of 1918, and Anne L. Bohning, Class of 1915 (MRBC call no. 855 Al11c 1745)

## Martin Antonetti, Curator 1997–2016

Martin Antonetti brought to Smith his passion for books and manuscripts—from the medieval to the modern—and the desire to share his knowledge about them and enthusiasm for them with others. He sought to broaden the reach of the Mortimer Rare Book Room (MRBR), within Smith and beyond; he and associate curator Karen Kukil made approximately seventy class presentations and other lectures each year. Antonetti also was the founder and director of the Book Studies Concentration, based in the

MRBR, and he taught full-semester courses in the history of the book and in contemporary artists' books for the Smith Art Department, using materials from the rare book collections.

Antonetti has written and lectured on many aspects of book arts, including fine printing, letterforms, bookbinding, and book collecting. He came to Smith College from his position as librarian and director of the Grolier Club in New York City, the country's premiere organization for bibliophiles. He also is on the faculties of the University of

Virginia's Rare Book School and the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science. A classicist by training, he received his library degree from Columbia University in New York, where he specialized in rare books and special collections librarianship.

One of Antonetti's scholarly interests is the work of the 16th-century writing master and printer Ludovico degli Arrighi. Antonetti's research included collaboration with Zoe Mindell, class of 2008, who

examined an original manuscript in Madrid while on a break from her Junior Year Abroad in Florence. Antonetti's investigation of Arrighi's work resulted in the publication of "New Clues to the Early Life of Arrighi" in the summer 2012 issue of *The Book Collector*. His research on Arrighi continues. In July 2016, Antonetti became Director of Distinctive Collections at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.



Photograph by Jim Gipe



Shannon Supple teaching students in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, spring 2017

## Shannon K. Supple, Curator 2017–

Shannon K. Supple joined Smith College Libraries as Curator of Rare Books in March 2017, three months before the Mortimer Rare Book Room closed. She strives to develop, support, and promote collections and services that connect people to historical and cultural materials and to facilitate research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. She curates collections of rare and curious printed

books, literary manuscripts, artist books, and graphic arts. Supple works closely with students, faculty, donors, Libraries colleagues, booksellers, artists, and researchers of all kinds to enable access to and exploration of cultural and historical materials. She envisions Special Collections as a place for critical inquiry, imagination, experimentation, and dynamic exchange. Her research interests

include disseminations of knowledge and the interplay between histories of the book, art, and science.

Prior to coming to Smith, Supple was Head of Reference and Research Services at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley. Currently, she is active in various professional organizations: Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College

and Research Libraries, Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP), Society of American Archivists (SAA), and History of Science Society (HSS).

## The Rare Book Room as a Teaching Laboratory

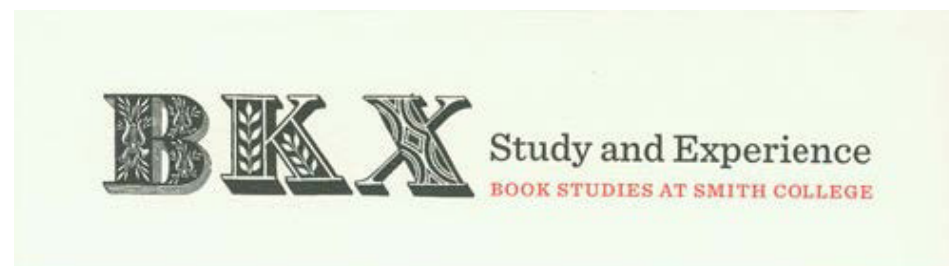
The rare book collection at Smith always has been shaped to support the curriculum. Eunice Wead taught using the collection in 1945–47. Dorothy King reported to the library in May 1949 on an “experiment” to determine whether or not it would be practical or suitable to use the Rare Book Room as a classroom for an art department course on the art of typography, likely taught by Clarence Kennedy. Miss King concluded that the small reading room, with one table, was not adequate for regular class meetings each week, and she also was concerned about wear and tear on the printed books. She recommended: “If a laboratory collection is needed it should be gathered together as a special library outside the rare book room.” Yet, she also stated that “great numbers of students can learn much from the fine books which the Library now owns.” Dorothy King did provide access to materials in the Rare Book Room by students and faculty, although she closely supervised and somewhat limited opportunities for close scrutiny. The opening of the spacious reading room in 1962 allowed for increased use of the collection.

Ruth Mortimer’s arrival at Smith in 1975 brought a dramatic change in pedagogy in the Rare Book Room. In 1976 she first taught “The Composition of Books,” her very popular course offered through the fall of 1993. During this semester-long seminar—limited to 12 students—Mortimer and her class discussed the history of books, printing, and illustration, using original materials from the collection, which students were encouraged to handle carefully and examine during class and at other times in the rare book reading room. Students also set metal type and printed a keepsake each year. This practicum in letterpress printing continues to this day, just outside the rare book reading room. In 1983 Mortimer wrote about her extraordinary and unusual course—offered to undergraduates—in the *Wilson Library Bulletin*. Mortimer stated: “Undergraduates are surprised to learn that what they need in the Rare Book Room is not a note from their professor but intelligent curiosity. They are free to look at what interests them.”

Michèle Cloonan (curator 1995–1996) taught a course similar to

Ruth Mortimer’s. Martin Antonetti taught two courses in book arts during his time as curator from 1997–2016: “The Art and History of the Book” and “Artists Books in the 20th Century.” Students in the Book Studies Concentration (established in 2011) are required to take two courses in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, an introductory course and a senior-year seminar. Antonetti, associate curator Karen Kukil, and other members of the rare book staff also

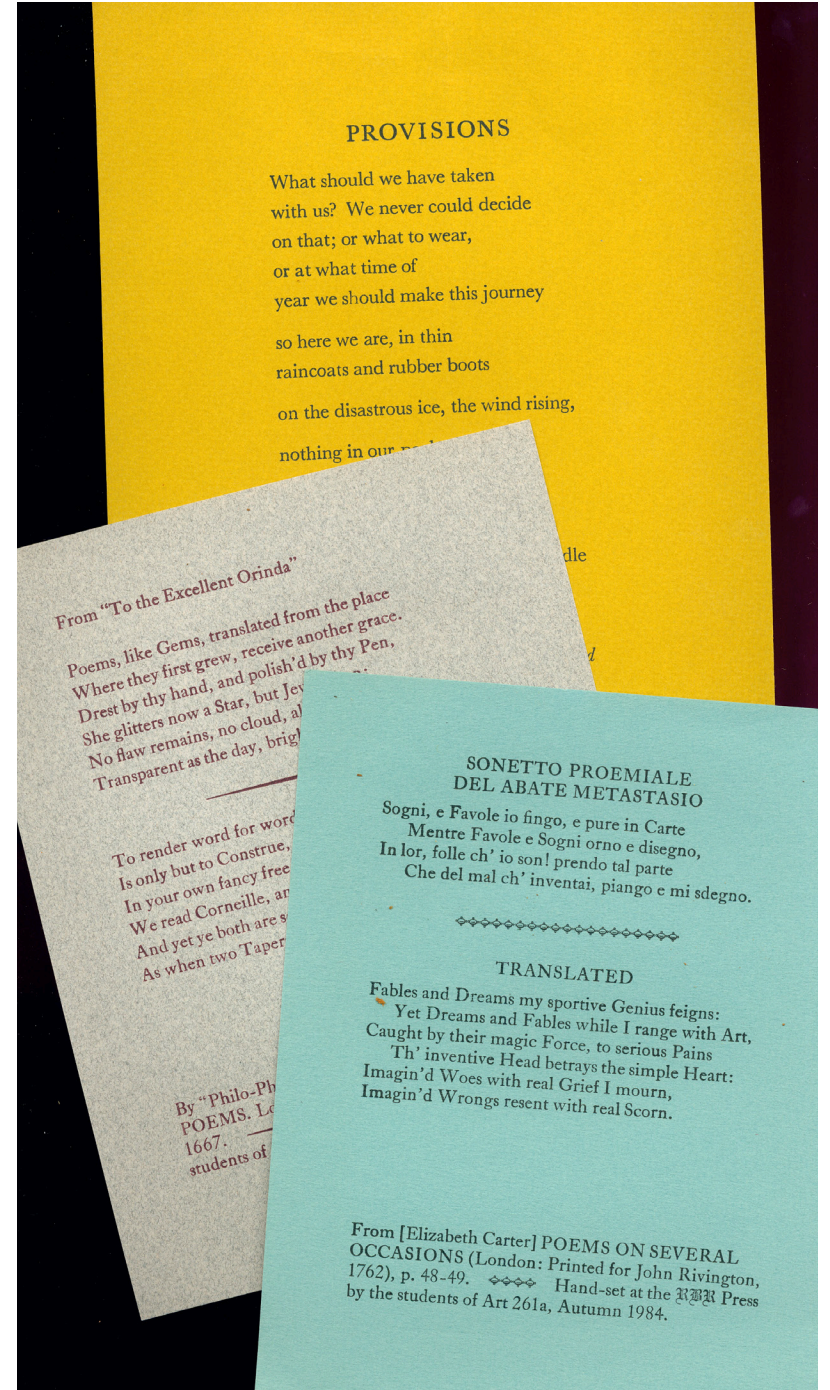
offer instruction each year to scores of Smith classes and outside groups in many fields of study. A growing selection of objects demonstrating the arts of the book—printing plates and blocks, bookbinding models, etc.—are also used in teaching. Exhibitions throughout the year provide students and the general public with a glimpse into Smith’s varied collections; sometimes students themselves curate exhibitions.



The Book Studies Concentration (BKX) bookmark exemplifies its broad scope from the past to the future: one side features ornated 19th-century typefaces while the other has a QR code which is linked to the BKX website



Ruth Mortimer pauses while arranging books for exhibition in the Rare Book Room, 1976.



"Composition of Books" printed keepsakes

## Long-term Rare Book Room Staff Members

From 1962 until May 2017, the Mortimer Rare Book Room was located in the northwest wing of Neilson Library. Administered by the Curator of Rare Books, it had its own staff for cataloguing, reader services, teaching, and creating and installing exhibitions. The Rare Book Room staff always was small in number (never more than than six people). There also were numerous student work-study assistants.



### Ritsuko T. Ozawa

1959: Assistant in Neilson circulation department

1963: Assistant in Rare Book Room

1968: Assistant curator of rare books

Retired in 1984

Mrs. Ozawa was the primary cataloguer of rare books for twenty years, although curators Dorothy King and Ruth Mortimer also did some cataloguing.

Photograph from *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), 1981



### Karen V. Kukil

1990: Assistant Curator of Rare Books

2007-2020: Associate Curator of Special Collections

As the Associate Curator of Special Collections, Kukil develops, catalogs, and preserves rare book, manuscript, and archival collections; interprets collections to undergraduates; teaches courses for the Archives concentration; directs special studies; and provides reference services and access to special collections.

Kukil's professional background includes experience in publishing and advertising, in addition to her staff appointments at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Lewis Walpole Library, where she worked closely with renowned collector and editor Wilmarth S. Lewis. Kukil also served three separate times as Interim Curator of Rare Books at Smith between 1994 and 2017. Her specialities at Smith include the Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf Collections, both of which include books and manuscripts.

Photograph, 2016, by Isabella Casini, Smith College class of 2017



### Barbara Borenstein Blumenthal

Smith College class of 1975

1976-1987: Rare Book Room assistant

1993-2017: Rare Book Specialist

Blumenthal was responsible for many things in the rare book room: supervising the reading room, assisting the curators with classes, preparing and installing exhibitions, answering research questions, doing graphic design for rare book room publications, and helping to supervise student workers.

Aside from her work at Smith, Blumenthal is a bookbinder and proprietor of Catawba Press, and an occasional instructor and lecturer on book history and book arts.

Photograph, 2017, by Fran Ferry



### **Alison M. Scott**

1985-1989: Assistant curator of rare books, Smith College

Other professional library positions: Head librarian of the Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green (OH) State University; head of collection development at George Washington University; UCLA Associate University Librarian for collection management and scholarly communication, 2017

Photograph *circa* 1988



### **Sarah M. Black**

Approx. 1985-1989: Rare Book Room assistant

Sarah Black assisted curators in the reading room and with classes and created numerous exhibitions. In 1994, although she no longer worked at Smith, she designed the Mortimer Rare Book Room plaque outside the entrance.

Photograph *circa* 1988



### **Shirley Zachazewski**

Zachazewski spent about 40 years cataloging general collection books at Neilson Library, before she joined the Rare Book Room as cataloger about 1994. She retired from Smith in approximately 2006 and died in 2011.

Detail from 1954 Smith College Library staff photograph (Smith College Archives)

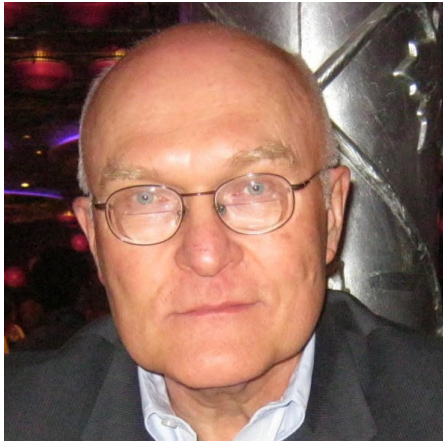


### **John Lancaster**

John Lancaster and Ruth Mortimer met in 1971, when both were catalogers at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. They were married from 1974 until Mortimer's death in 1994.

Since his retirement, John Lancaster has been a freelance cataloger of rare books and consultant for Smith College, the UMass Amherst Renaissance Center, and for other libraries and research projects worldwide.





### Melvin Carlson, Jr.

After retiring as a cataloguer at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in 2002, Mel Carlson worked part-time in the Mortimer Rare Book Room from 2003 to 2016, creating and revising cataloguing records for most of the Mortimer Rare Book Room manuscripts and ephemera collections. In addition, he organized numerous manuscript collections and created finding aids for those collections.



### Mark Morford

Mark Morford (1929–2019) was Salloch Fellow in the Mortimer Rare Book Room for approximately 20 years. He had a long career as a classics professor at Ohio State University and the University of Virginia. In 1995 he was the visiting Kennedy Professor in the Renaissance at Smith, and after he retired from the University of Virginia, he moved to Northampton. He completed a catalogue of all of the MRBR incunabula (15th-century books) and was a frequent visitor in the reading room, where he conducted research, translated documents from Latin and German, and generously gave of his time, vast knowledge, and friendship to staff, students, and visitors.



### Kim Evans Perez

Assistant in the Mortimer Rare Book Room  
Kim Evans Perez joined the Mortimer Rare Book Room staff about 1995, doing data entry and other work as an assistant in the Mortimer Rare Book Room. She also prepared a number of exhibitions. Perez left Smith in the fall of 2002 to be come the Children's Librarian at the Lilly Library in Florence, MA.