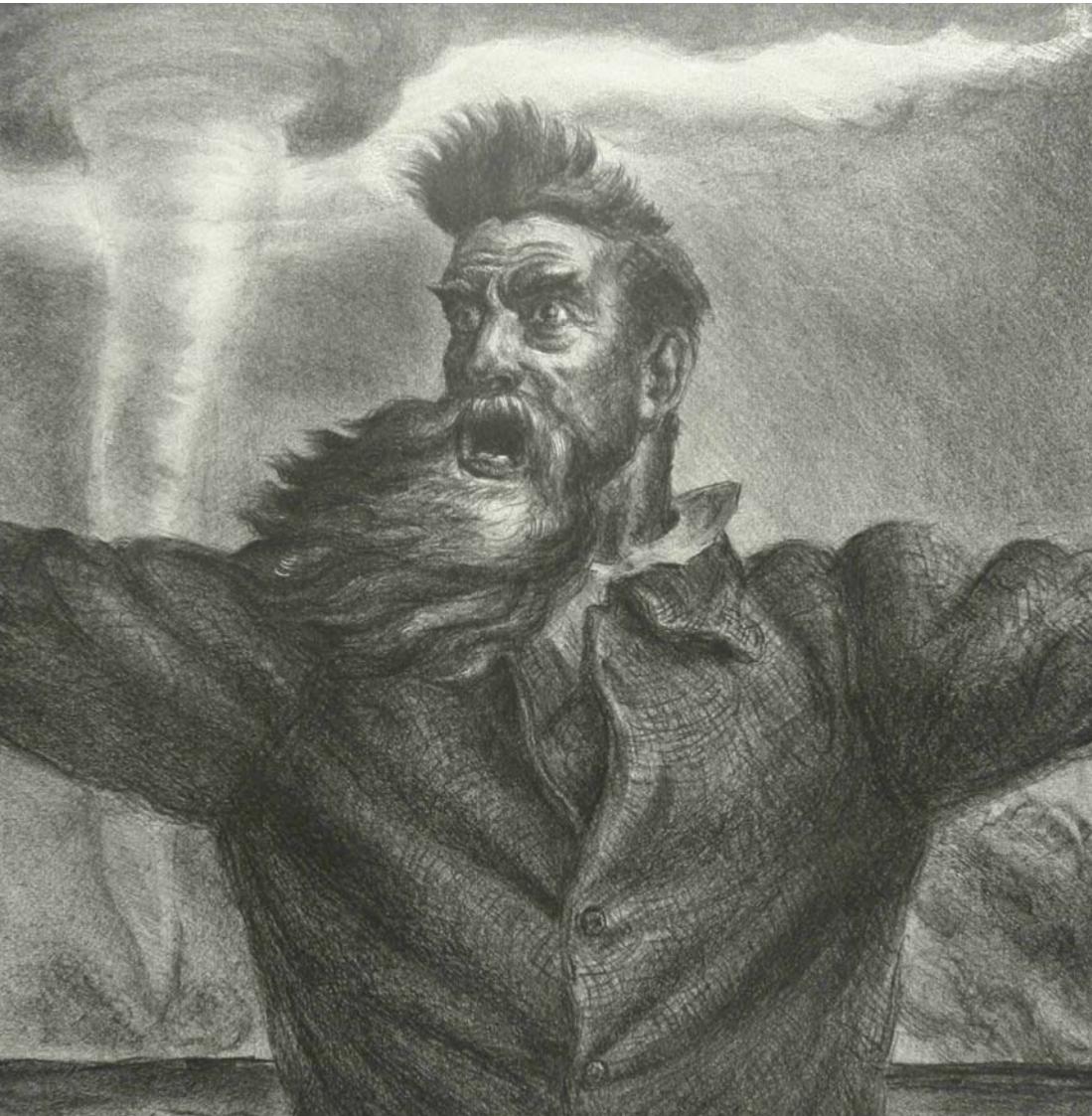


# *Rare Books*

Washington University Libraries  
Department of Special Collections



## When the Department of Special Collections

opened in 1962, the Washington University Libraries owned a small rare book collection, the finest pieces of which had been donated by St. Louis collector William Keeney Bixby. Throughout the 1920s and early '30s, Bixby made significant donations of manuscripts and printed books, including a number of volumes produced by fine presses and a virtually complete Hawthorne collection.

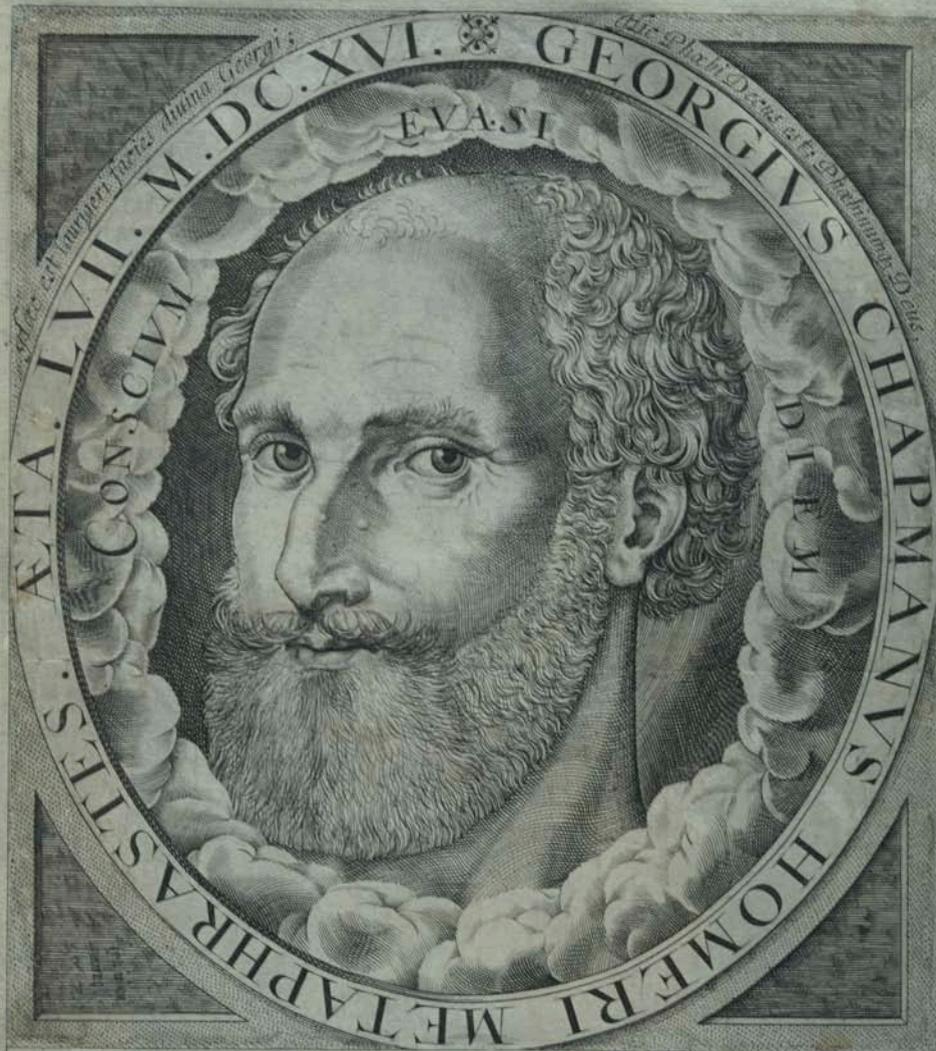
Special Collections' rare book collections now include some 50,000 printed pieces and represent all the disciplines for which the University Libraries collect. The collections' primary strengths are in the areas of literature; the material culture of the book, including the history of printing, graphic design, and the book arts; and aspects of American and world history. Spanning seven centuries of written and visual communication, these collections support teaching and discovery across the University and are freely accessible to scholars and visiting researchers.

*Front and back covers:*  
Embossed endpaper sheet printed in gold and copper by Johan Wilhelm Meyer, stamped with maker's name. Augsburg, 18th century.

*Left:*  
*John Brown* by John Steuert Curry, 1939.

All photos by Mary Butkus.

<b>Rare Books</b>	<b>Volumes</b>	<b>Areas of collection</b>
	50,000	Literature Book arts History of printing Graphic design History



Optimus Sic voco, qui novit cuncta Magister,  
 Prospiciens rerum fines Meliora sequutus  
 De Homero Rediit. Aes:  
 Scuen Gungdomo stroue, whic? Chapm. Houles Homer sall.  
 On d nono ond Chapman, cronca sun xcom hrem alb. Scotia nobilis.  
 Eruditorum Poetarum huius Tui facile Principi, Dno Georgio Chapman;  
 Homero (velit nolit Inuulua Rediit). G. M. Iewellam hanc  
 Xagisngion. D. D.  
 Ille simul Musas, et Homerum scripserit ipsum,  
 Qui scribit Nomen, (Magne Poeta) tuum.

## Literature Collections

The rare book collections include literary works from the 15th century to the present. Early modern holdings feature significant works by Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, Beaumont and Fletcher, Milton, and Dryden, as well as Pierre de Ronsard and Lodovico Ariosto. The collection is particularly strong in 19th-century works, with numerous examples of the popular “three-decker” format, and modern literature, including the work of important 20th-century literary figures such as William Gaddis and Tennessee Williams.

### George N. Meissner Collection

The library and autograph collection of St. Louis collector George N. Meissner came to the University in 1962 as a gift from his family, along with funds for the construction of Special Collections’ original reading room and storage space. While part of Meissner’s collection can be found in the manuscript unit, its roughly 2,000 volumes are held in the rare book collections. They represent fine books from the 15th century to the present, including early illuminated manuscripts and incunabula. One of the collection’s most notable volumes is Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s copy of Chapman’s *Whole Works of Homer* (1616). The volume includes Coleridge’s annotations and inscription to Sara Hutchinson, the object of the poet’s unrequited love.

Left:  
*The Whole Works of Homer* translated by George Chapman, 1616. With annotations by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.



### Modern Literature Collection

Special Collections' most comprehensive holdings are found in its Modern Literature Collection. Unique literary archives (found in the manuscript unit) form the core of this collection and are complemented by definitive collections of published works: first editions, later editions, copies corrected or inscribed by the authors, and other materials pertaining to the authors' lives and writing. In the years since this collection was formed, its list of authors has grown from 46 to more than 170, including such figures as Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Marianne Moore, and James Merrill.

### Henrietta Hochschild Collection of Children's Books

St. Louis educator, reading specialist, and long-time collector of children's books Henrietta Hochschild donated a choice selection from her library—more than 1,000 books, magazines, and ephemeral pieces documenting the evolution of children's literature—to Washington University in the 1980s and '90s. The collection is used by researchers interested in the influence that fairy tales, fantasy, and other popular works have had on the literary, social, and

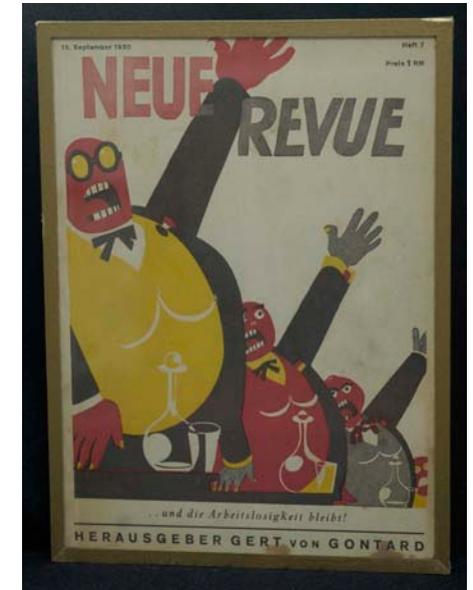
*Above:*  
The Pop-up Mother Goose  
illustrated by Harold B.  
Lentz, 1933.



moral development of writers and artists who read these books as children. Students of book history and its related specializations—design, illustration, the interplay of text and image—also find the collection a valuable resource. Special Collections continues to add to the collection, most recently through the Constance and Montague Levy Children's Literature Fund.

### Gert von Gontard Collection

Gert von Gontard was a book collector, patron of the arts, and publisher of the 1930s avant-garde literary and arts magazine *Neue Revue*. Forced to flee his native Germany during World War II, he devoted his life to what he described as “the holy mission of art, the overcoming of international prejudice.” His personal collection, donated to Washington University in 1981, includes more than 4,500 volumes on art, literature, music, and theater. Approximately 1,200 items are related to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ranging from first editions to autograph letters and an original drawing by the young Goethe. The von Gontard family continues to support the collection and to enhance its holdings.



*Above left:*  
Some/thing cover by  
Andy Warhol, 1966.

*Above right:*  
*Neue Revue*, edited and  
published by Gert von  
Gontard, 1930.



## History of Printing, Graphic Design, and the Book Arts

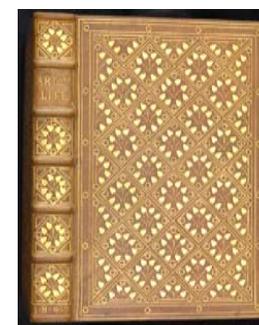
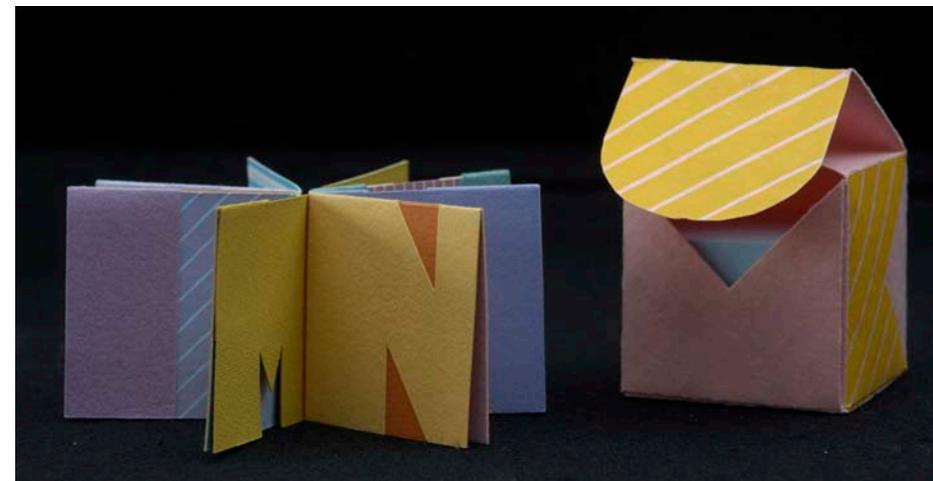
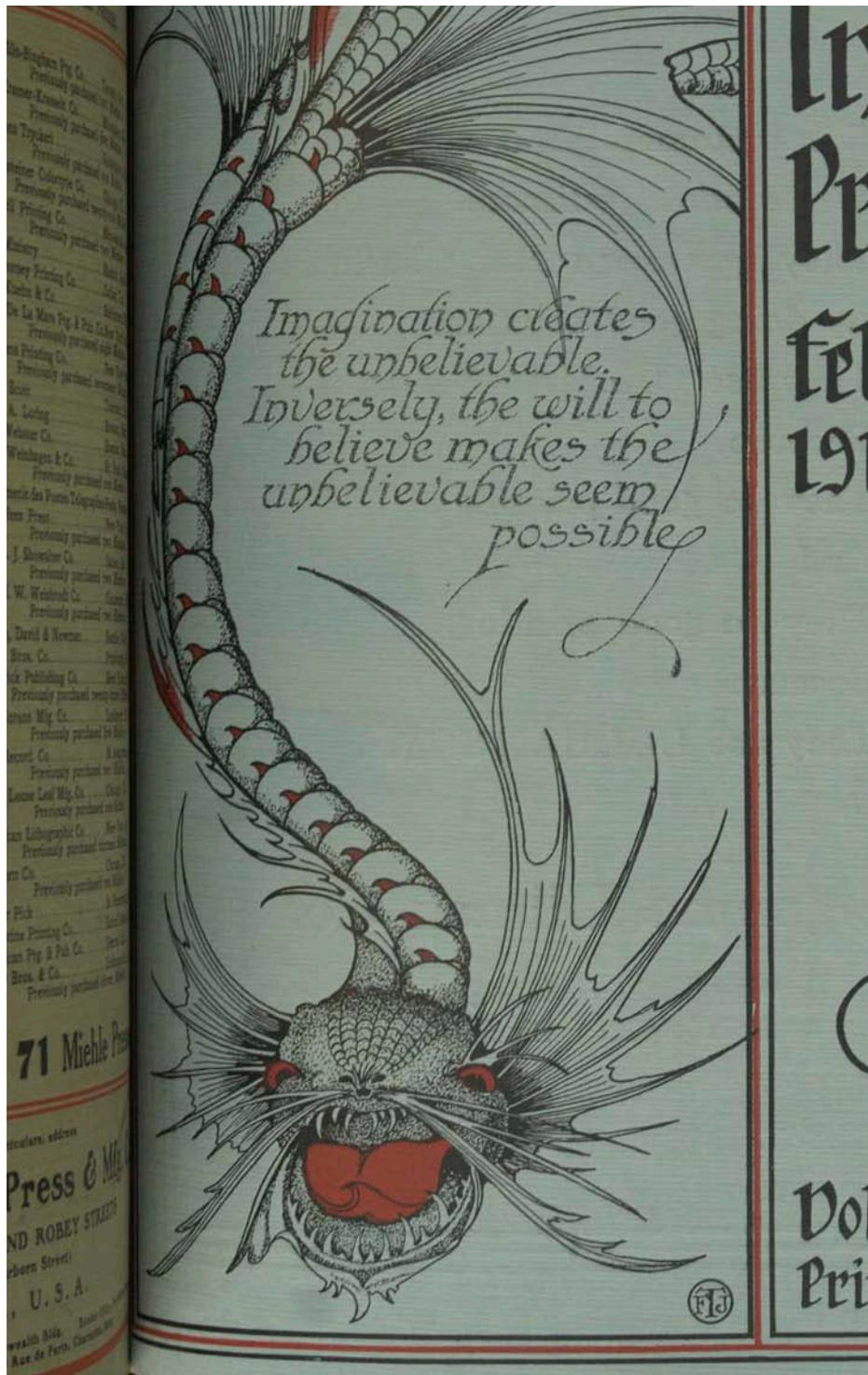
From its earliest years, Washington University's School of Art has valued graphic design and the book arts. It taught bookbinding as early as 1902. Today, Washington University students continue the tradition of bookmaking in the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Studio for the Illustrated Book, generously funded by Nancy and Kenneth Kranzberg and jointly administered by the College of Art and the University Libraries.

A number of rare book collections support research and teaching in the Book Studio and in other classes that emphasize visual communications and the history of typography, design, and printmaking. New and developing collections include the Modern Graphic History Library, emphasizing 20th-century illustrators of popular media, and the Urban Book Collection of works depicting cities and the urban experience.

### **Isador Mendle Memorial Collection on the History of Printing**

In 1968 Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Mendle established a collection in honor of Mr. Mendle's father, Isador Mendle (1882-1935), a leader in the St. Louis printing industry and the founder of the Mendle Press, Inc. Mendle's interest in the printing processes of the 20th century suggested a new focus within the Libraries' printing history collections,

*Left:*  
*Dlya Golosa* by Vladimir  
Mayakovsky, designed  
by El Lissitzky, 1923.



namely, developments in printing since the Industrial Revolution, with an emphasis on the last 100 years. Included are examples of fine commercial work that represent early uses of new technologies, as well as works that describe technical developments. Notable holdings include process materials from the innovative Gogmagog Press, as well as the papers of printing historian James Moran.

### Holly Hall Book Arts Collection

Under the influence and guidance of Holly Hall, head of Special Collections from 1975 to 1995, the Department developed its collections in the book arts. Hall was interested in books that encourage discussion of the nature of the book itself—the relationship of text and image, and the ways in which design contributes to reading and understanding. Items purchased for this collection include artists' books and works by fine presses, and often feature unusual structures or thought-provoking design elements.

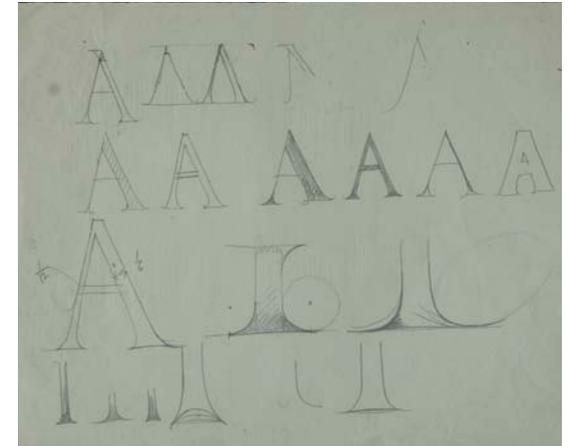
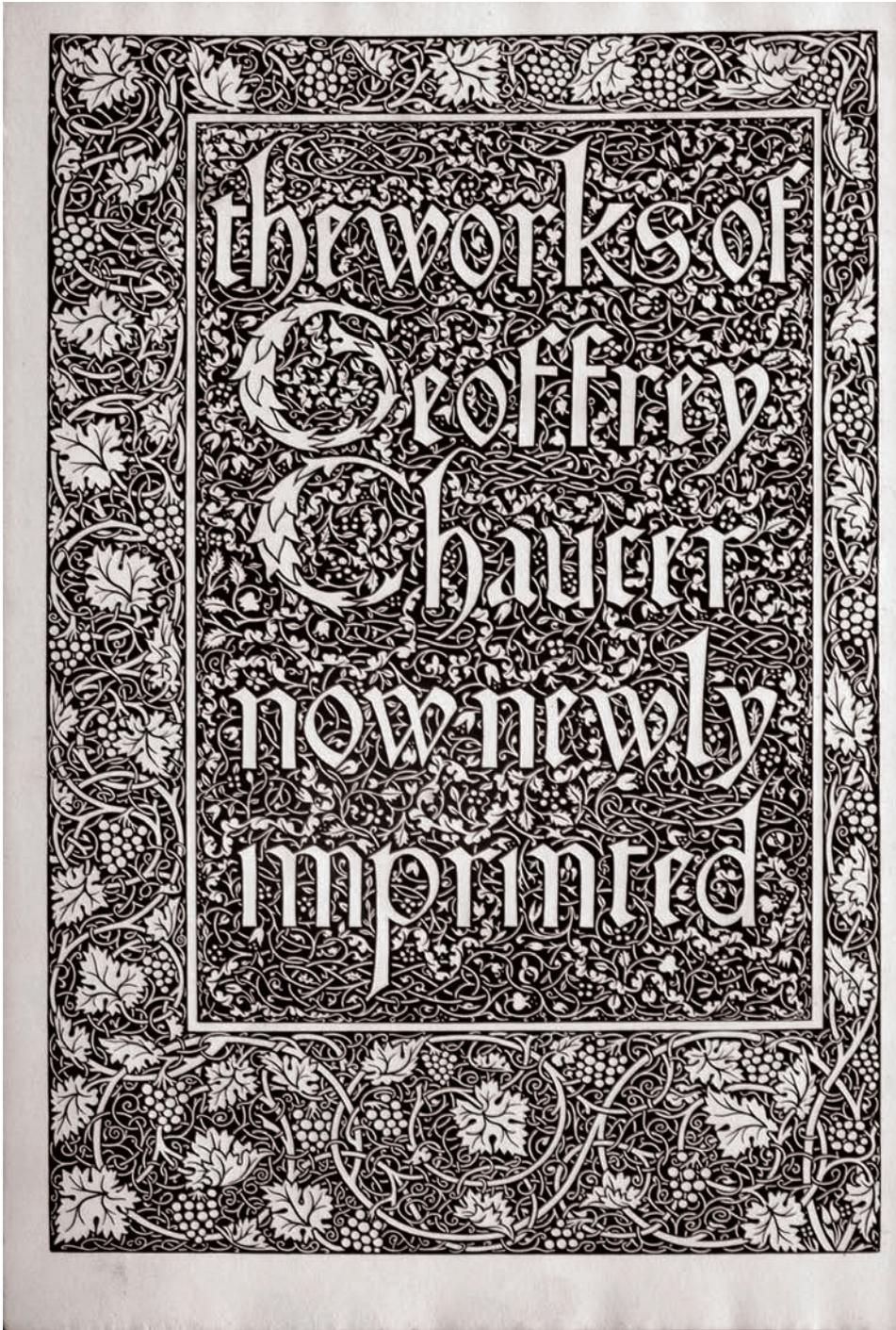
*Left:*  
*The Inland Printer*, 1911.

*Above top:*  
*Tumbling Blocks for Pris and Bruce* by Audrey Holden and Claire Van Vliet, Janus Press, 1996.

*Above left:*  
*Opera cum Commentariis* by Horace, 1516.

*Above middle:*  
Bookbinding by Cordelia T. Baker, 1902.

*Above right:*  
Printing blocks used by the Ashendene Press, 1902-1905.



### Triple Crown Collection

The Libraries' 1998 acquisition of a copy of the Kelmscott Press's magnificent *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1896) complemented Special Collections' substantial holdings of private press books and spurred the Department to further develop its collections related to the English Arts & Crafts movement. The Triple Crown Collection, built over 68 years by collector Charles Gould, was acquired by the Libraries in 2000. The collection includes virtually the complete published output of the Kelmscott, Doves, and Ashendene presses, which together represent the pinnacle of English Arts & Crafts bookmaking. What makes this collection especially valuable for researchers is that Gould also amassed hundreds of items relating to the history and production of each press. The collection includes business correspondence, proof pages, alternate bindings, preparatory sketches, and even original woodcut printing blocks.

### Eric Gill Collection

Eric Gill (1882-1940) was an English sculptor, calligrapher, engraver, and writer, but he is perhaps best known as a designer of typefaces, including the famous Gill Sans. Acquired in 2005, this collection documents Gill's interests and activities over the course of his lifetime and includes books, drawings, hand-lettered alphabets, woodblocks, proof pages, and correspondence. Scarce and ephemeral items such as issues of *The Game*, a homey periodical produced by the community of craftworkers co-founded by Gill, provide insight into the combination of practicality and spirituality that governed the artist's life and work.

Left:  
*The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, printed at William Morris's Kelmscott Press, 1896.

Above left:  
Type specimen of Gill Sans by Eric Gill, 1930s.

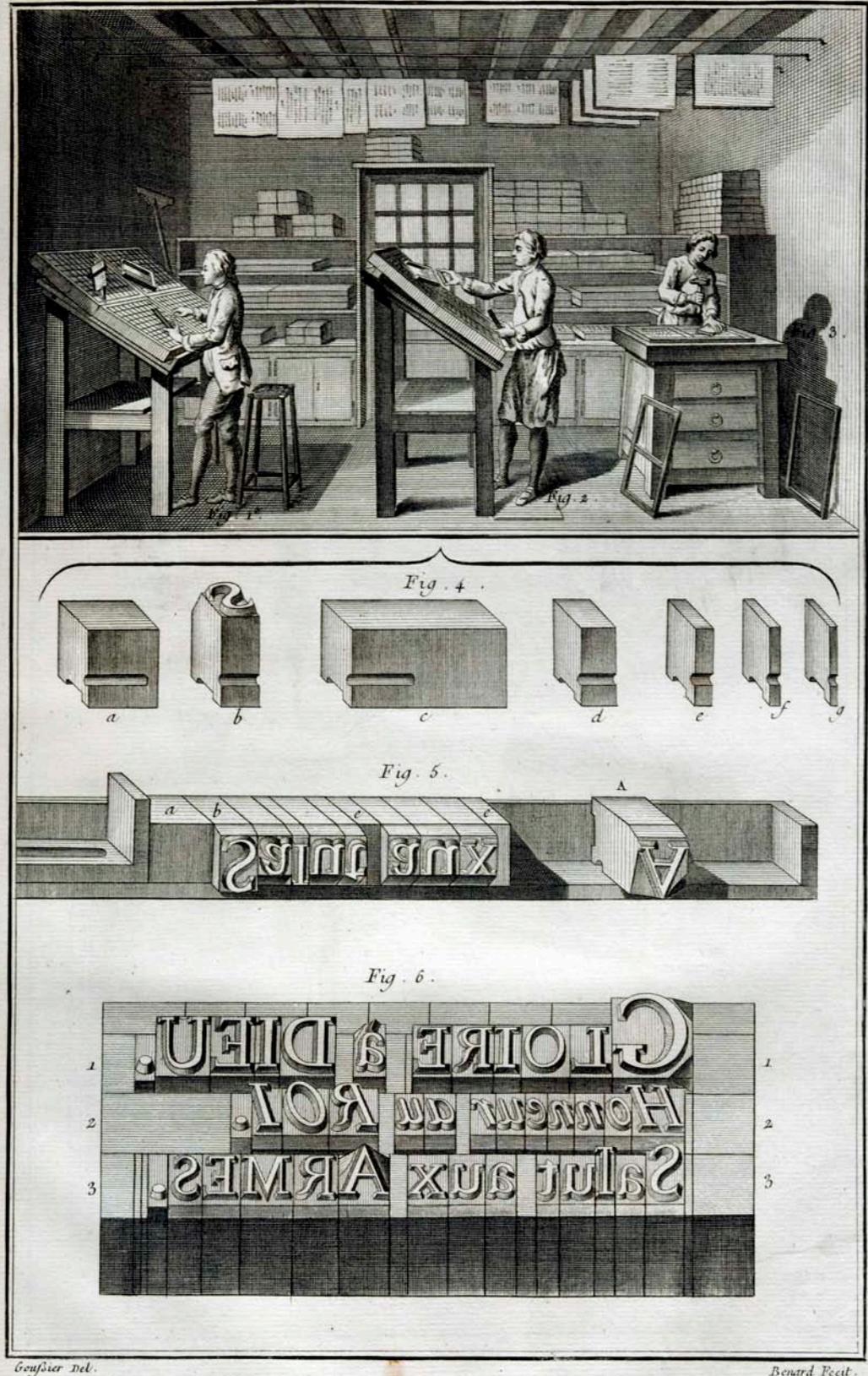
Above right:  
Letters drawn by Eric Gill.

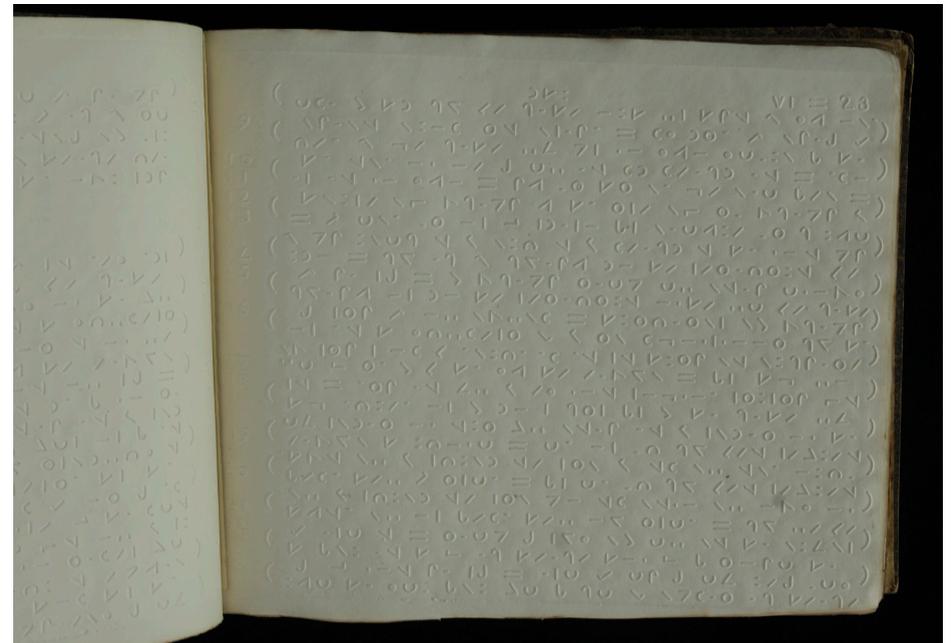
# History

While the Libraries' rare book holdings in the area of history are selective, they include some fine collections and individual titles. Early works include Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum* (Latin and German editions, 1493), and a number of accounts of the New World published by the Renaissance engraver Theodor DeBry. Other historical materials include collections of political pamphlets relating to the French Revolution and to 20th-century Russia. Important works in the history of science include Diderot and d'Alembert's monumental *Encyclopédie* and Galileo's *Dialogo* (1632), in which the astronomer challenges ecclesiastical orthodoxy to defend the Copernican system.

Three St. Louis collectors—Richard S. Hawes, Arthur C. Hoskins, and Stratford Lee Morton—have presented distinguished Americana collections to the University, and as a result of these and other gifts, the Department houses strong collections on St. Louis, Missouri, and the Mississippi Valley, including early St. Louis imprints, atlases, geographic dictionaries, illustrated books, and travel accounts. The collections also include a number of books relating to the Louisiana Purchase International Exposition, or World's Fair, held in St. Louis in 1904. University Archives holds additional collections on St. Louis and Missouri history.

Right:  
Plate from *Encyclopédie; ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, 1751-65.





**Philip Mills Arnold Semeiology Collection**

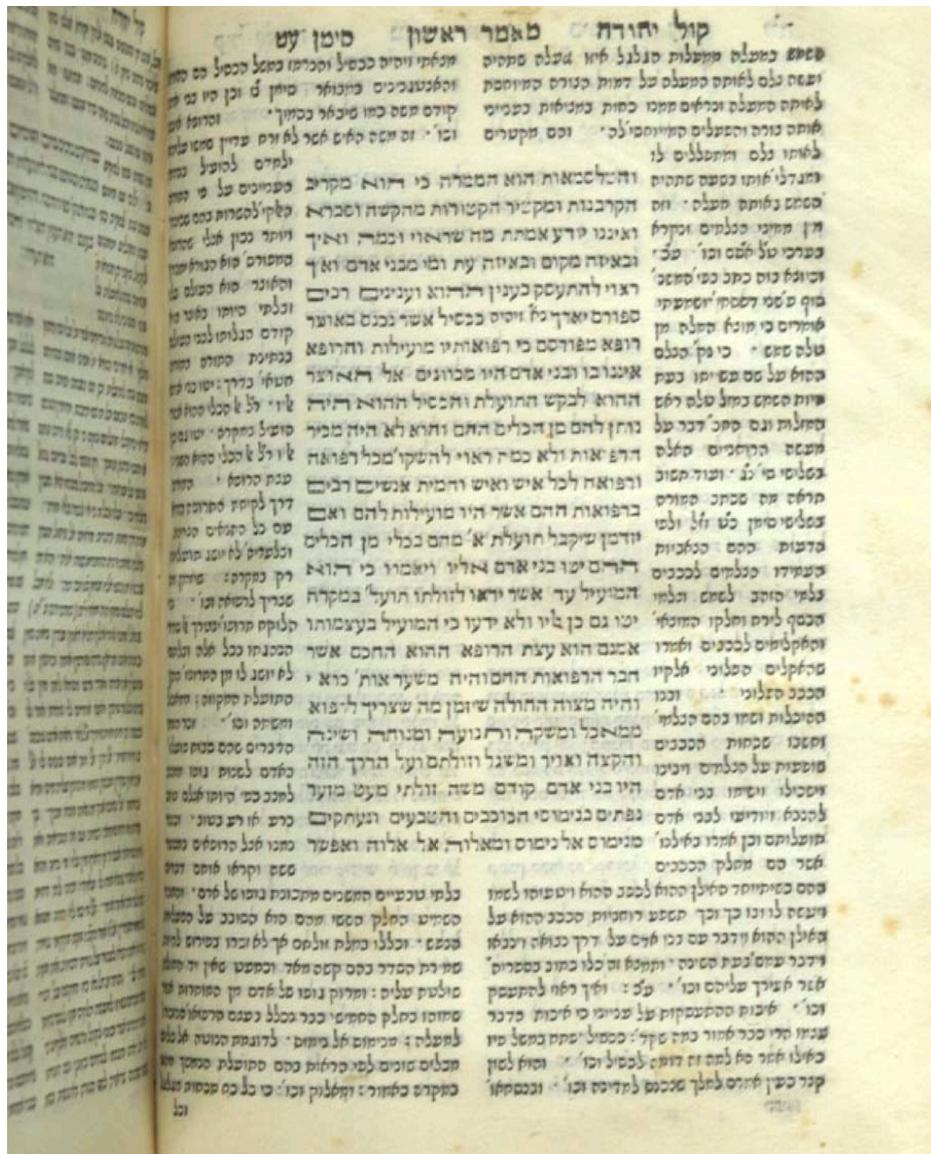
The Arnold Semeiology Collection is perhaps the most varied and unusual of the rare book collections. Broadly concerned with the history of communications, its particular strengths are in the areas of cryptography; artificial memory; decipherment of ancient writing systems; universal languages; and early developments in stenography, Braille, languages for the deaf, and various forms of non-verbal communication. After his initial gift, Arnold worked with Special Collections for roughly 30 years to develop and expand the collection to some 1,600 volumes. The collection includes materials from 1490 to the present, and the Department continues to make additions, most recently through the purchase of Francis Guelker's collection of books on 20th-century cryptography.

Left:  
Ordo Universi et  
Humanarum Scientiarum  
Prima Monumenta  
broadside by Petro  
Narvaez de las Ynfantas  
after Andrea Bacci, 1591.

**Shimeon Brisman Collection in Jewish Studies**

The Brisman Collection in Jewish Studies was purchased by Washington University in 1972 from Shimeon Brisman, a Judaic bibliographer at the UCLA Library and expert in

Above:  
The Gospel according  
to Saint Matthew,  
embossed in  
James Hatley Frere's  
stenographic system for  
the blind, 1841.



Hebrew bibliography. Several hundred of the collection's nearly 3,600 volumes are located in Special Collections (the rest are in Olin Library's general collection). Half the volumes are in Hebrew. An impressive array of bibliographic works makes up approximately one-fourth of the collection. Several hundred works of modern Yiddish prose and poetry, as well as hundreds of rabbinical commentaries, responsa, and liturgical literature are also included.

Above:  
Sefer ha-Kuzari  
by Yehuda Halevi,  
translated by Yehuda ibn  
Tibon, 1594.



**James E. and Joan Singer Schiele Print Collection**  
This collection of some 200 prints documents the American abolition movement, Civil War, and Reconstruction period. Providing a visual overview of historic events during one of the nation's most tumultuous times, the collection includes portraits, battle scenes, and political cartoons represented by a variety of printing techniques, from woodcut to chromolithograph. Especially significant is a complete set of 36 prints of Civil War battle scenes by the prominent firm of Kurz & Allison, whose specialty was creating high-quality chromolithographs to commemorate important events in American history. The Schiele Collection offers a unique resource for the study of this seminal period.

Above top:  
The Emancipation of the  
Negroes, January 1863:  
The Past and the Future  
by Thomas Nast, 1863.

Above bottom:  
Battle of Cold Harbor  
by Kurz & Allison, circa  
1888.



All units of Special Collections are open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, except for University holidays.

#### **To Visit**

Researchers are not required to make appointments, but the Department recommends that anyone coming from out of town call in advance. Instructors should contact the Department to arrange class visits.

#### **Location**

Olin Library, Level 1  
(Olin Library is located in the center of the Danforth Campus.)

#### **To Learn More**

[www.library.wustl.edu/units/spec/rarebooks/](http://www.library.wustl.edu/units/spec/rarebooks/)

#### **Contact Us**

Rare Books  
Department of Special Collections  
Washington University Libraries  
Campus Box 1061  
One Brookings Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63130-4899

Phone: (314) 935-5495

Fax: (314) 935-4045

E-mail: [spec@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:spec@wumail.wustl.edu)