



<http://www.library.upenn.edu/publications>

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Regan Kladstrup
Rare Book Cataloging Librarian
215-746-6398
kladstru@pobox.upenn.edu

January 18, 2011

Penn Libraries Receive Mellon Grant for Cataloging Hidden Special Collections

PHILADELPHIA – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded \$490,700 to the University of Pennsylvania Libraries to create online cataloging records for 33,500 titles in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library Culture Class Collection. Administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program, “Promoting Research through Rare Book Cataloging Partnerships” is a three-year grant that will provide access to the Penn Libraries’ original rare book collection.

The project will rely heavily on contributions from students studying in relevant disciplines who, together with other project cataloging staff, will create dynamic, constantly evolving bibliographic records that will not only serve as initial points of discovery for scholars but also present results of new research. “Mellon and the CLIR program continue to enable the Libraries to make more accessible a vast trove of Penn’s most unique collections,” said H. Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries. “Because of this grant, we are able to reveal a rare collection of significant scholarly value to the Penn community and beyond.”

The Culture Class Collection contains a remarkable wealth of materials documenting European and American print culture, in its widest sense, from the early Renaissance through the end of the nineteenth century. Highlights of the collection include 470 incunabula from the earliest decades of printing, a 1528 edition of Homer’s works owned by King Henry VIII and signed by his son, the future King Edward VI, hundreds of titles from the English Restoration of the 1670s and 1680s, including one annotated by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, over 1,000 pamphlets from the French Revolution, thousands of Dutch proclamations, numerous seventeenth- and eighteenth-century broadsides and pamphlets from the German state of Braunschweig, an exceptional collection of works by and about the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz that documents his early reception, and over 500 early printed editions of Aristotle, many in vernacular translations and many with commentaries.

The collection is notable for the enormous amount of copy-specific information contained within the individual volumes. Many are in contemporary bindings, such as one with the Medici family coat of arms in gold and colors on the cover, while others hold a wealth of information about provenance and use, including evidence of censorship and of readers’ responses to the texts. The project will not only increase scholarly access to and use of one of the Penn Libraries’ finest collections of rare books, but will also show, through detailed descriptions and copious reference citations, how titles in the collection have been used and received by scholars.

###



Office of the Vice Provost and Director of Libraries
Rm 257 Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center
libdir@pobox.upenn.edu | 215-898-7091