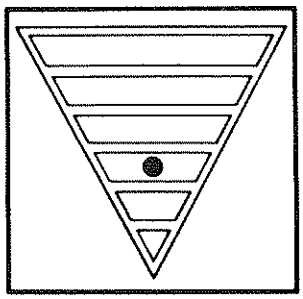

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by Roger S. Bagnall and Carolyn L. Harris

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This article and the project upon which it is based concern the involvement of scholars in preservation decision making. Findings indicate that scholars do not always agree about how much and what collection material should be saved. Several alternative models are suggested for successfully engaging scholars in this enterprise.

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For years, librarians have decided, with consultation and a sophisticated bibliographic network, what to add to collections. They have also decided, usually of necessity and always under duress, what materials to remove from a collection and which to locate in offsite shelving facilities. These decisions can often be obvious, based on collection scope, the obsolescence of materials in certain subject areas, or other basic criteria. But librarians have not often had to make decisions about what materials will remain for future scholars and what materials may be lost. Nor have scholars, who have traditionally taken the role of recommenders of items to be added to the collection, been the arbiters of things to be removed. The project described in this article aims to involve scholars directly in the making of choices in preservation.

It is generally agreed that we have more collection materials in need of preservation than we can possibly save before they begin to disappear. We cannot, therefore, waste our resources on materials that are unimportant; choices must be made. Currently, most preservation programs concentrate on preserving the contents of brittle materials with little artifactual value—that is, parts of general circulating collections. This article and the project on which it is based concern the preservation of the contents of materials, not the conservation of the physical artifact of rare or unique materials.

Approaches to Decision Making

There are two levels of decision making involved in preservation: microdecisions, or title-by-title choices, and macrodecisions, or choices by collection, subject, or other broadly specified criteria. It is often much easier to decide to preserve all the materials in a certain category than to agonize over the relative importance of individual titles to future research. A title-by-title approach also involves constant judgments about the comparative rarity of individual titles—judgments that may or may not be based on adequate information.

Such difficulties inherent in the microdecision process have generally led librarians to use several approaches to preservation without any involvement by scholars. The four approaches most commonly practiced are described below.

Vacuum Cleaner Approach. The vacuum cleaner approach consists of preserving on a wholesale basis everything from a particular range of dates or place of publication, belonging to a particular collection, or on a specific subject. For example, the participants in the Research Libraries Group Cooperative Preservation Microfilming Project will preserve a significant number of titles published in the United States from 1870 to 1920, the worst brittle-book period. This universe of titles is divided among the participants by subject.[1]

This approach has both strengths and weaknesses. The major strength is

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that little time is expended on decision making. The philosophical underpinning is that if the materials are in our library collections, they must be worth preserving. And it is argued that there might someday be a use even for materials whose importance is not evident at present. The major weakness is that materials which may never be needed by scholars take up time and money and thus displace more important materials that aren't in the chosen group. Moreover, some materials that are not in brittle condition will be microfilmed because they are a part of the area being filmed. Since this approach is usually taken with a specific collection, such a filming project will not include materials that may be important but are not held in that collection. The key to a successful use of this approach is the careful choice of universe and of criteria for selection, preserving for the future the strongest collections in a particular area. This is important because once the period or subject is covered well by one collection, it is unlikely that any other library will give that area priority for its own preservation program.

Condition-Driven Approach. In the condition-based approach, materials that can no longer circulate because of their condition are sent to the preservation department for replacement in microform. Usually these items are identified as they circulate or are discovered in an inventory. In some programs a bibliographer reviews the materials to see if they are worth preserving; in some they are automatically preserved. The strength of this approach is that the materials that are most in danger of loss are preserved, and that materials most used in the past are thus saved for presumed heavy future use. On the other hand, these materials may not actually be the most important to preserve.

Bibliographic Model. Bibliography-based approaches are widely used by commercial micropublishers. For example, the items listed in Wright's *American Fiction, 1774-1900* have been filmed in their entirety. Materials identified by the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalog* project are in the process of being filmed. This approach works well because a bibliographer has identified all of the materials of importance in an area. It also provides for bringing together materials that may not be held in one particular library. A weakness of this approach is that there are not adequate bibliographies in many fields, and some bibliographies reflect the eccentricities of the author's judgment, and are not comprehensive for a period.

Collection Development Model. Title-by-title models generally involve decisions made by collection development librarians based on their knowledge of a field and of individual titles. When the bibliographer is knowledgeable or has the time to gather information about individual titles, this method can work well. Often, however, bibliographers have to work in many subject areas and carry heavy loads of responsibility for purchases, reference work, and faculty liaison. Some bibliographers bring faculty into the process, but such faculty involvement is generally time consuming for both parties and, in any case, adds only one person's opinion. This approach suffers from delays in making informed decisions and from inconsistencies resulting from differing decisions by different bibliographers.

Scholar Involvement. The evident disadvantages of each of the approaches to preservation decision making are numerous. In an ideal situation, the librarian would be able to consult knowledgeable scholars in every field, scholars who would act not as narrow specialists, but with comprehension of the broader world of scholarship—recognizing, for example, that bad poetry or dreadful regional novels may nonetheless be of importance to social historians. The project of the American Philological Association (APA), the national professional association of classicists, provides an example of the benefits and problems associated with an attempt to involve conscientious scholars very directly in preservation decision making.

The APA Project and Its Aims

In 1984, the APA was awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to preserve on microfiche the most important materials in classical studies published between 1850 and 1918. The project aimed both to preserve and to provide access to these materials to individual scholars and to research libraries. An editorial board of seven scholars, specialists in different aspects of classical studies from universities across the US, was appointed to select the materials. The actual microfilming was contracted to the Columbia University Libraries Preservation Department.

The project has had three purposes at work:

- the preservation of a substantial body of the most important material from classical studies in a mature but now endangered period;
- the improvement of scholarly access to this material through wide availability of inexpensive copies; and
- an investigation into how a preservation program involving scholars directly in decision making might work.

These three purposes sometimes lead to substantive philosophical differences among the parties involved in the enterprise of preservation and to conflicting answers to questions about how the project is to operate. Those conflicts reflect basic problems in the transformation of our scholarly information system.

An Endangered Period. The birth of modern classical scholarship was one of the driving forces of the European Renaissance; by 1850, the classics as a subject of study were centuries old. As a result, classical studies in the 19th century were more developed than our modern scholarly disciplines. The period from 1850 to 1918 saw the publication of large numbers of critical editions and commentaries of both major and minor classical authors; the development of scientific archaeology and the first major controlled excavations; and the organization, in forms still dominant today, of the documentary disciplines like epigraphy and papyrology.

Scholars may disagree about the value of particular works from this period, but all classicists doing research must use the editions, collections, and working tools produced before 1918. The project seeks, therefore, to preserve permanently the most important part of this heritage. During the last three decades some important works have been reprinted and others have been filmed. In the nature of things, materials already chosen for preservation tend to be those most important and most used. A strict pursuit of preservation of material most at risk and not already preserved, therefore, would tend to leave scholars mainly second-tier works.

Improved Availability. It is at this point that the second objective modifies choices. It seems unlikely that our society will be able to afford—or at least choose to afford—to invest large sums of capital in preserving the scholarly heritage of

19th- and early 20th-century classical scholarship *twice*. We have thought it imperative, therefore, to look at the present work in preservation as offering us the *one opportunity* we will have to transform the conditions of access to this older scholarship for most of the scholarly community.

Current conditions are well known: holdings of individual libraries are erratic and incomplete, libraries can afford to add their older holdings to bibliographic utilities only very gradually, copies of some works are impossible to acquire unless they have been recently reprinted or filmed or unless one is willing to pay for filming-to-order. The end of the academic affluence of the 1960s, coupled with a radical decline in academic mobility, has left large numbers of competent scholars teaching in institutions with no viable research collections, especially for the older material. These teachers have little free time to travel to better libraries and little funding available to do so in what free time they have. Similarly, their students often have no means of access to major research collections. In undertaking this filming project, the APA was motivated in part by a conviction that such inequity of access was unacceptable.

Creating a Model. Finally, the scale of the project is such that it can make only a modest impact on either of these two objectives. We therefore seek to discover what we can about the generalizability of our experience. What happens when scholars must make the choices in matters of preservation and access? Do the results justify the costs? Will scholars dedicate enough time to the enterprise to make it work? How far can preservation and access, as criteria for decisions, be reconciled? These and other questions have been kept in mind from the start, and a number of tests have been made to help us find answers to them.

The Preservation Aspect

The original proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation was based on the subjective impression that the 1850-1918 period contained the greatest concentration of material at risk. It was estimated that the body of material in classics from this period amounted to some 20,000 volumes, not counting German dissertations and Programmschriften. (These last categories were preserved on film, for the most part, by a Title II-C project at the University of Cincinnati Classics Library.) The proposal called for filming 2,550 fiches each year for 3 years—thus, 7,650 fiches, or 13.7 percent of the estimated body of material (at 3 fiches per volume) would be made in total.

Number of Volumes. Without generating a complete bibliography, it has been difficult to determine how accurate the original estimate of 20,000 volumes was. One test was made after a year's experience of the project to try to verify the figure. Indications would point to a universe for this period of 15,083 volumes in Greek and Latin literature.[2] If we bear in mind that this number must be increased by items in ancient history and archaeology classified elsewhere, and decreased by dissertations and Programmschriften included in it, the original figure of 20,000 may be seen to be approximately correct.

Percent Needing Preservation. A check on condition was also made. The percentage of books in need of preservation in the 1850-1918 period was 96.1 percent, or almost the entirety. By way of comparison, 72.3 percent of the pre-1850 books and 56.6 percent of the post-1918 books needed preservation. While these figures are not unimportant, the area of greatest need is clearly that which we picked.

Percent Previously Filmed. Another point of ongoing interest has been a determination of how much of the recommended material had been filmed before. At the one-year mark, the figure stood at 11.6 percent, but after another three months it had reached 14.6 percent. We continue to track this statistic, but a range of 10 to 15 percent seems accurate. If it holds up, we would find the amount to be filmed in the current project approximately equal to that already filmed, not counting dissertations.[3] At the end of this project, therefore, we may expect that somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of the material from this period in classical studies will exist on a film master registered in some source accessible to us.

Scholarly Access

The long view of access must include two key elements: the availability of the material itself and the ability of users to find it. Any preservation project which enters its work into a nationally accessible bibliographic utility, as this one does into RLIN, contributes both to the completeness of the database and to making the master negative of a work available to any user. The accessiblity of bibliographic information for such items through RLIN could indicate that the existence of multiple copies is no longer important. As long as the negative exists, little-used material can be replicated on demand, at reasonable cost, and in a reasonable time.

Immediate vs. Remote. This is not, however, the view that this project has taken, for such a system cannot take adequate account of how classical scholars (and many of those in other humanistic and historical disciplines) work. These scholars tend to use most items in research libraries, especially older materials, for brief consultation. They arrive in the library with many references to books and articles to check; only a few of them will turn out to be pertinent to their particular research needs. In a well-stocked library, the scholar can inspect many items in a brief span, then return to the handful of them which deserve longer study. But in a system where most materials are located elsewhere and must be specially ordered—with a significant wait and sometimes a cost for each item—scholars will choose to order only the few items which seem most likely to pay off. Anyone who has discovered something important in the 27th obscure reference checked will see how potentially damaging it is to have to overcome inertia on each item.

Advantages of Microfiche. A really good system of access, therefore, will make as much as possible available as many places as possible. The use of microfiche—unusual among preservation projects—reflects the project's commitment to access. Fiches can be duplicated cheaply once the master exists, and they can be read or consulted on relatively inexpensive equipment which is widely available. Also, because scholarly resistance to all microforms is widespread, the project embodies a deliberate strategy of making available on inexpensive microfiches such a large amount of important material that resistance may be overcome. If it can, two major side benefits will follow: sales revenue will help fund further preservation, and scholarly attitudes toward preservation filming will be improved.[4]

From this standpoint, the choice of what to preserve is no longer so clear. Choosing the most important works will best serve the criterion of access, and, in the long run, build support for further preservation. But in many cases these works may be the least endangered.

It is thus the conviction of the APA's Editorial Board for Microforms that,

once the capital costs of filming have been paid, the choice of relatively inexpensive microfiche service copies offers the optimal means of affording such access. Hard copy reprints simply are not economical on this kind of scale—their prices have become increasingly unaffordable for all except a handful of libraries—and they do not represent a permanent solution to the problem of preservation.

The Future. While it is clear that storage on an electronic medium, probably optical disk, will ultimately replace the use of film, this revolution seems distant. Because of the complexity of fonts and layout in many works of classical scholarship, text cannot yet reliably be scanned by OCR (optical character recognition) technology. The image itself must instead be digitized, leading to an enormous increase in the amount of data to be stored. Rough calculations made this year suggest that, at present, one would need a minimum market of 200 copies in order to have CD-ROM compete with microfiche in per-page cost. And microfiche reading equipment is still much cheaper than anything which will allow access to optical media. It may be noted also that the relatively simple technology of microfiche makes it possible for users in less-developed countries to have access to material which, if available only in optical media, would be for their purposes nonexistent. Scholarship in classical studies is very much an international enterprise.

It should be pointed out, however, that we assume that new technologies will ultimately make preservation microfilming obsolete. This project has therefore been designed to allow for the conversion of microfiches into a different format when another technology is shown to be superior in terms of cost and access.

Costs

Equipment. The capital cost of preservation filming is substantial, and therefore, we have been concerned from the start to make this same cost lead to improved access. Some explanation of costs is thus in order here. The Columbia University Libraries Preservation Department's microfilming operation has been in place since the late 1930s. Over the years, the equipment has grown to five cameras, a high-speed processor, and a duplicator. One of the five cameras is capable of filming on 16mm film. With the addition of equipment to jacket-load the 16mm film into fiche jackets and to duplicate the fiches, the operation could handle a fiche project with little in the way of capital start-up costs.[5]

Staff. Even so, filming costs in themselves are only half of the total costs of the preservation operation. Staff was necessary to:

- gather filming recommendations;
- find and pull materials from the stacks;
- collect the proper bibliographic records;
- make sure that the materials had not already been preserved;
- enter the record into RLIN (with a queue date to indicate to other libraries and users when Columbia had decided to film the item);
- prepare the materials for filming;
- type fiche identification labels;
- catalog the items after filming; and
- keep records and monitor progress.

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This is not an inexpensive process, and it is thus important that it be carried out properly the first time: materials must be completed with missing pages, issues, or volumes borrowed from other libraries, and rigorous technical standards and quality control procedures must be followed.[6]

Other Options. Currently, preservation microfilming is the least expensive of the options available for preserving this material. In many cases, it is the only option. The paper on which these materials are printed has become so brittle that no physical treatment will reverse the process. Physical treatment of these items would involve leaf-by-leaf treatment, in most cases encapsulation in polyester—an expensive process. Very restrictive storage will reduce future damage in many cases, but at the cost of interference with scholarship and thus a negation of the purposes of preservation.

The costs of microfilming, however, can be justified by the relatively low cost of duplicating items once they are preserved. The small size of the potential market makes it unlikely that the capital cost can in most cases be amortized over copies sold, and most of this material is thus not of much interest to commercial micropublishers. On the other hand, where preservation is subsidized for its intrinsic scholarly importance, it is possible to serve goals of access and at the same time recover some of the costs to help support further filming.

The Scholars

The Editorial Board. The APA's Editorial Board was put together to represent various subject specializations, and classical antiquity has been divided up among its members. The scholars involved are about half Hellenists and half Latinists in prinicipal interests, with specialties not only in literature but in ancient history, archaeology, Roman law, ancient religion, epigraphy, and other disciplines. Boundaries between subfields are naturally porous, and there have been numerous cases of a work recommended by more than one member of the Board. The plan was for the Board to have four major meetings at Columbia and a couple of shorter ones at the APA's annual meeting. The meetings have been devoted to discussions of general principles and methods of operation, rather than to discussions of particular selections. The complementarity of the scholarly interests of the seven members no doubt avoided some collisions, though this result was not specifically sought in composing the Editorial Board.

Selection Methods. The work of selecting titles is accomplished through the efforts of Board members working individually. Their methods have varied. Many of them have used as starting points the published shelf lists of Widener Library at Harvard. Publication of these shelf lists by subject and arrangement by date within the subject make them particularly useful for our purposes. (When the preservation value of a volume was not readily determinable from the bibliographic information, it was generally pulled from the shelf for examination.) Several members have done shelf reading in their own libraries or in specialized libraries such as the American Academy in Rome. Some work has proceeded from standard biblio-

graphic tools in classical studies. Members of the Board have varied considerably in productivity as well as method.

Once works are selected, they are put on recommendation forms, preferably with a copy of the National Union Catalog (NUC) record for the item or the volume and page number of that record. The submissions are then checked by a graduate assistant in the APA's office, who finds and copies the NUC record (or one from another source if the item cannot be found in the NUC). The graduate assistant also corresponds with Board members to clarify ambiguities and resolve differences such as different members' choice of different editions of a particular work.

Advantages to Scholarly Involvement

Creating a Core Collection. The particular form of scholarly involvement which the APA project uses has advantages for each aspect of the underlying aims. In the effort to preserve the core literature of the discipline from the period at stake, the Editorial Board helps create, in effect, a bibliography for a national collection in classics, chosen in scholarly fashion and not on the basis of any one library's holdings. If the project can reach the point where the entirety of the previously unfilmed items in these lists has been preserved on film, the resulting collection, when taken with what was filmed before, will constitute a core collection for the field. What remains at risk, in that case, will be the material of lower priority for scholarly usage.

Maximizing Access, Generating Funds. The same process will also create a body of the most desirable titles from the period with which to fuel an attempt to market microfiches to scholars and libraries, which will in turn maximize access to materials and provide revenues for continuation of filming. In the long run, such a result should make it possible to preserve the largest possible part of the field's literature at the same time that it makes it available to the largest possible number of users.

Encouraging Commitment. Finally, direct scholarly involvement of this sort develops a sense of ownership of the enterprise of preservation. For the classicists on the APA's Board, preservation is not just something librarians do; it is something that matters intensely to their own work now and in the future. In many cases members of the Board have become effective spokespersons for the usefulness of microfiche and the importance of preservation. The intensity of this involvement is closely tied to the fact that these scholars have done so much of the actual work of selection.

Disadvantages of Scholarly Involvement

There are, however, disadvantages to this model of scholarly involvement in preservation, and these must be faced frankly. They fall into three general areas. The first group derives directly from the involvement of scholars, and the most disadvantageous of these is cost.

Costs. Although grant funds cover the direct, paid cost of the operation of the editorial board, one major cost is not covered: the time of the individual scholars. The various ways that they work in selecting materials, as described above, are all time consuming. We do not know yet how much time has been involved, but it has been very substantial. In addition, the members of the editorial board —though enthusiastic and willing from the start—have had to learn the facts of preservation microfilming and the implications of their decisions. They had to face problems of selection, particularly the identification of what was secondarily important after the first, easy wave of choices had passed. They also had to determine whether materials were easily available in print or in reprint.

Second, there are library difficulties and costs incurred by Columbia (costs usually not recoverable under this project) which result mainly from the choice of microfiche. No overhead was charged to the project, none of the costs to hire, fire, and train staff, nor was general management and supervision accounted for. The Libraries also, because of the unit-cost reimbursement formula, bear all risks of failure to keep productivity up to the intended level, as well as risks of any original miscalculation about the time required to carry out various tasks.

Microfilming Process. Apart from costs, the project has been difficult to implement from the Libraries' point of view. The primary reason for this difficulty is that producing microfiche is not a well-established library technology. Roll film, in a 35mm format, is an accepted library technology, and its production is straightforward. The capital cost of higher volume microfiche producing equipment (a step-and-repeat camera) meant that the only affordable way to create fiche was to load 16mm rolls into jackets. The process requires typing headers for each fiche, determining ahead of time where to place targets, using unfamiliar equipment, and reversing many procedures such as quality control. It also required separate processor runs for 16mm film. Because the polyester fiche jackets attract New York City dust and soot, and there are requirements for the placement of the film emulsion, we have had many trials to find the best ways to load film into jackets, to produce headers, and to duplicate fiches.

These learning experiences have taken time, and that time has not been compensated. Except for the New York environment, most of these problems would probably occur in any medium-sized library operation used to roll film. (One conclusion we have drawn from this experience is that the choice of fiche ought to be linked to the availability of step-and-repeat cameras in high-volume facilities where these problems are minimized.)

National Project, Local Resources. A third area of difficulty has been the national, rather than local, character of the project. The editorial board members worked independently at separate institutions, without reference to the Columbia collection. About 30 percent of the recommended materials were not found in the Columbia Libraries. (Board members—especially the two at Columbia—were surprised by this figure, but it confirms previous overlap and verification studies of collections in other fields.) Since many of the recommended materials *are* at Columbia, however, filming has proceeded on that body without trying to get books in other collections. In the last stages of the project we will request that holding institutions allow us to film their copies or that they film them in their own preservation efforts. Dealing with a national project using local resources has also raised questions of retention of the paper copies after filming.

Politics and Principles

The involvement of scholars in preservation decision making has sharpened our sense of some of the key issues in preservation, both philosophical and pragmatic. Some of these deserve a brief discussion.

Scholarly Disagreement. Scholars do not agree among themselves on the issue of whether everything should be preserved. This fact has emerged both

from the Editorial Board's discussions and from a practical test run on shelves of books chosen at random in the Columbia Library. Five members of the Board were given two shelves each and asked to indicate for each item within the project date limits whether or not it ought to be preserved. The scholars differed significantly on the number of titles recommended for preservation, and the aggregate result for all items was about a 3 to 2 ratio in favor of preservation.

The categories marked not worth saving by the Board members included:

- translations of ancient authors,
- low-level historical narratives which do little more than regurgitate the sources, school texts and examinations, earlier editions of a work for which a later edition exists, and
- unchanged reprints of earlier editions.

It seems clear, however, that a different group of scholars, with different interests, might disagree. (For example, historians of education might wish to see all of the school texts preserved.) The Board as a whole is divided between those who feel that large quantities of material could well be allowed to sink into oblivion, and those believing that posterity may find a use for some items that now appear useless. Though there is no consensus, the latter view appears to be preponderant.

When the complete list of titles recommended in the first year was distributed to the Editorial Board, the reaction was interesting. A number of comments came in saying, in essence, that scholar A thought that this or that work recommended by scholar B was bilge and not worth saving. The project staff quickly came to the conclusion that if we used a method in which all members looked at a list of titles and voted, we might reach agreement on only a handful of titles. Overall, however, the Board concluded that it was better to err on the side of preserving items that *someone* thought useful than to omit things because of disagreements, and we think that this view would probably prevail in any group of scholars.

Switching Formats. One difficulty faced by librarians in preservation programs is the reluctance of faculty members to see hard copy disappear. Even the fact that a book is crumbling to pieces does not necessarily reconcile scholars to its replacement by a format seen as less convenient. The only long-term solution to this problem that does not involve impossible outlays of library resources or inaccessibility to scholars is persuading users that microforms (and eventually optical storage) are not less convenient for most purposes. This is not going to be a quick process, and pragmatic resolutions have to be found in the meantime.

Disbinding and Discarding. In the case of this project's home library at Columbia, there was considerable unhappiness on the part of some faculty members about the disbinding and discarding of books in connection with filming. The issue first came to the Board's attention in the matter of illustrations in archaeological books. For these illustrations, the Board has adopted the principles in use at Columbia's Avery Art and Architecture Library, namely, by distinguishing among:

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- line illustrations (normally disposable, as they reproduce adequately on film);
- half-tones (usually retained, as their detail is not easily captured on microfilm);
- monochrome maps (disposed of if not necessary to the use of the book); and
- color plates (always retained).

If a book with needed illustrations could not be filmed without being disbound, it was not filmed.

More difficult problems are posed by more ordinary books. The sample constituted by the first 120 volumes filmed yielded the fact that almost all (93 percent) were on brittle paper. The project director indicated those books that seemed (a) to have a chance of surviving filming, (b) to be filmable without disbinding, and (c) to be relatively useful and important in book form for retention if possible. These amounted to 40 percent of the sample. Out of these 48 books, 30 turned out to be reshelvable without treatment after filming; 3 needed (and could take) rebinding; 5 needed loose pages tipped in; and 10 needed boxing if they were to be returned to the shelf at all. Procedures have been worked out to try to identify before filming those likely to be in the last two categories, which will be disbound. This policy aims at minimizing the retention of badly damaged books and yet retaining those of greatest expected utility in book form. That it will satisfy all parties is unlikely, but it appears to be a practical solution.

Degree of Involvement. The advantages and disadvantages of the kind of scholarly involvement represented in this project make it clear that a major concern must be finding the right degree of entanglement. If scholars believe that someone else is making the decisions about the survival of their research resources, they are likely to react with resentment, as librarians have often found in the sensitive area of withdrawal of books from collections. On the other hand, there is a limit to how much time can be put into library work without drawing scholars away from their other duties. As we consider other possible models of decision making below, this balancing act must be kept in mind.

Other Possible Models Involving Scholars

Despite many difficulties, this project has been successful in most ways. We nonetheless find it difficult to suggest that other scholarly disciplines would do well to follow it in every detail. Many disciplines will not have the dependence on library resources, the dedicated and willing scholars, and the finite, manageable number of important works that have made this project possible. It is not clear that many scholars would be willing to devote the requisite time to a title-by-title approach to preservation. For such situations which make a replication of the classics approach difficult, we offer some suggestions which may still help to improve scholarly involvement.

Defining the Universe. One major improvement would be for the library to provide scholars with a defined universe of materials from which the more important items could be chosen. It could be expected, for example, that bibliographic records for a certain subject and range of dates could be pulled from a database and examined by scholars in that field. Until recently, however, not enough records from the earlier, more vulnerable periods had been converted into machine-readable format from catalog cards. In

the near future, this model should be more practicable. At RLG, for example, a shadow file is being kept for all retrospective conversion projects, for just this purpose. It would be logical for a preservation program to follow on the coattails of a recon project.

Providing Guidelines. Another improvement would be for an editorial board to provide libraries with guidelines and criteria for selection. For example, date periods, places of publication, types of material, or most important, authors or editors could be specified. An examination of the recommended titles in the APA project to identify patterns of this sort will be carried out at the end of the project. If such detailed determination of important materials is possible, it would use less of scholars' time and would give the library itself more definite criteria to follow.

Along these same lines, an editorial board might identify important collections of materials in a field that should be filmed. For example, the Goldschmidt Kress collection in economics at Harvard has been filmed by a commercial micropublisher. Less obvious collections which were still of great value might well be identified by panels of scholars. Such panels could work to identify from each broad discipline those subfields that are—by virtue of manageability of collection size, degree of scholarly interest, and vulnerability of important literature—likely candidates for preservation efforts.

Conclusion

At the end of the project, about 25 to 30 percent of an estimated body of 20,000 volumes of classics material, excluding dissertations, from the period 1850-1918 will be available in preservation masters. If one adds the 13,500 dissertations and Programmschriften filmed in the Cincinnati project, close to 60 percent of the classical materials from the period will have been preserved. Though this 60 percent may not be quite the same 60 percent that every scholarly committee would agree was really worth saving, it will include much of that corpus. Some worthwhile materials from the period will be left unrecorded on film, but these will not be enormous in quantity. Thus, relatively modest resources will have made possible the preservation of the most important literature of the most vulnerable period in a major field, and a large part of this material will be available inexpensively for purchase by libraries and scholars.

Many problems have cropped up in the course of the project, both in the actual production of microfiches and in the efficient use of scholars' time. While the organization of this project may not be directly applicable to many fields, certain lessons learned from it are probably generalizable:

1. Microfiche has substantial advantages over microfilm for scholarly access and acceptance, but it is not an easy technology to work with on a small scale. Regional centers which can benefit from economies of scale to use efficient equipment will make future projects much easier and more economical.
2. Scholars' time can be used more effectively if they do not have to work from dispersed and incomplete bibliographic resources. The bibliographic repertories of the disciplines are not easily used in connection with library collections and their catalogs. A concerted attempt to link recon programs and preservation projects would yield lists from which scholars could work much more efficiently than they could if they had to find titles.
3. The reasons for and consequences of preservation microfilming need to be made clear to scholars. The active involvement of scholars in the design and execution of preservation projects can help in this slow task of education and lead to greater acceptance by the colleagues of those involved, thus making scholars participants rather than obstructions in the task of developing the scholarly information systems of the next century.

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References

[1]For example, Columbia is filming American language and literature.

[2]The pre-1918 material in the Columbia collections is almost all in the Dewey Decimal section of the library, and it amounts to an estimated 28,536 volumes in the 870 and 880 ranges, where classical literature is cataloged. The project has yielded the discovery that Columbia owns about 70 percent of all titles recommended, and an application of this percentage would suggest that a "complete" collection in the 870 and 880 section would come to 40,765 volumes. A sample in this section indicated that about 37 percent of these volumes fell within our date limits of 1850 to 1918.

[3]It should be noted that 75 percent of the previously filmed material is available only in roll film, not on fiche. From the scholar's point of view, it is thus substantially less convenient to use. But on this point, the Editorial Board has preferred preservation to access as a criterion.

[4]In order to facilitate these goals, the APA is a partner (with the American Society of Papyrologists) in a nonprofit micropublishing venture, Classical Micropublishing Inc., which prior to the start of this project had a significant list of works in microfiche. CMI will offer the project's output to libraries and scholars at low cost (initially $1.50 per fiche, with large discounts for volume buyers); and surplus funds will be plowed back into more filming.

[5]We do not discuss the operating costs of the project in any detail because two cost studies of preservation microfilming, that of the RLG Cooperative Preservation Microfilming Project and one by Paul Kantor of Tantalus, Inc. (funded by the Council on Library Resources), are now available: Patricia A. McClung, "Costs Associated with Preservation Microfilming: Results of the Research Libraries Group Study," *LRTS* 30 no. 4 (Oct./Dec. 1986); Paul B. Kantor, *Costs of Preservation Microfilming at Research Libraries: A Study of Four Institutions* (Washington, DC: Council on Library Resources, November 1986). These should give a better idea of the real costs of the process and point to ways of controlling costs. The paid cost of the scholarly editorial process is expected to total about $10,000 over the life of the project, or a bit less than $1.25 per fiche.

[6]These standards are listed in the *RLG Preservation Manual*, 2nd edition (Stanford, CA: Research Libraries Group, 1986). ▼