

DISSERTATION COLLECTION

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Fig. 121. Ink rubbing of the front side of Wei Wenlang

In This Issue

This *Focus on Global Resources* newsletter features the dissertation collections developed and held by the Center for Research Libraries. For decades these holdings have supported scholarly research in almost every subject. Scholars have been able to follow the evolving understanding of the human mind and personality through dissertations written in the early 20th century by students of medicine and philosophy at German universities. They have traced the dawning awareness of the impact of Arab migration from North Africa and the Middle East to Western Europe in the 1930s and 40s in the theses of scholars at the Universities of Paris and Lyon.

Many of the 800,000 theses and dissertations in the CRL collection are available to North American scholars only through CRL. Thanks to a marathon CRL cataloging effort, records for all of these works are now discoverable online.

On page 1: Ink rubbing from the Wei Wenlang stele, from *Manifestation of the Dao: A study of Daoist Art from the Northern Dynasty to the Tang (5th–9th centuries)*, Yang Liu, University of London, 1997. CRL dissertation collection.

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CRL continues to acquire dissertations and theses from universities outside North America. We are also following with interest initiatives to make graduate documents available online. Notable among these are the *PQDT Full Text* database of the UMI Dissertation Publishing service and the Open Access repositories emerging at universities and consortia in the UK, Germany, France, and elsewhere. CRL recently did an analysis of the UMI collection as a case study under its National Science Foundation-funded [Long-Lived Digital Collections](#) project. The [report of that study](#) points out the benefits and limitations of the new service.

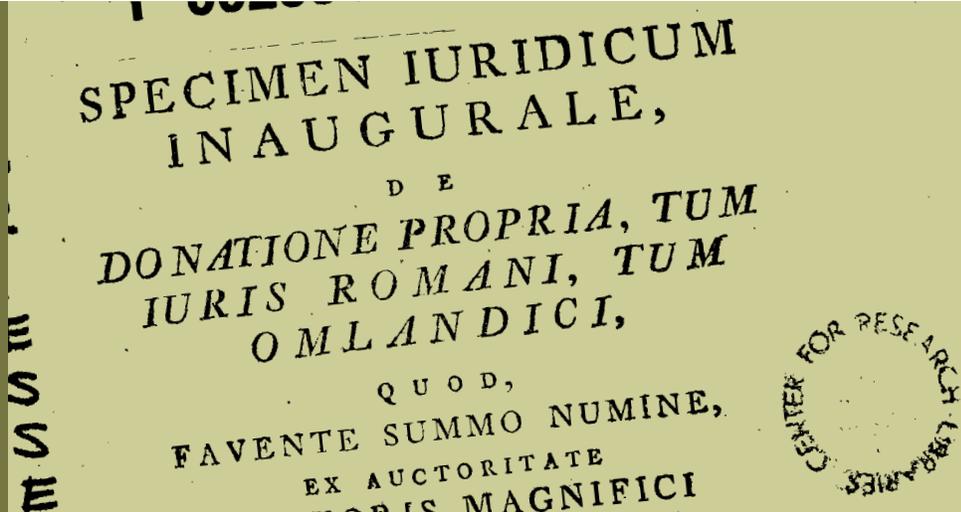
Whether in paper or electronic format, dissertations and theses continue to be essential to scholarly research. CRL's methods for ensuring access to them will change but its commitment to fulfilling this need will persist.

—Bernard F. Reilly, Jr.
President

CRL Completes Cataloging of the Foreign Doctoral Dissertation Collection

Beverly P. Lynch

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Paulus Driessen's dissertation, published by Groningae in the Netherlands in 1807, is one of the oldest in the CRL collection.

The foreign dissertation collection at the Center has been less a “hidden collection” than a “forgotten collection.” Uncataloged by early policy, the collection grew over the years to its present size of nearly 800,000 dissertations. Formed by a major gift from the Library of Congress of more than 200,000 pre-1940 foreign university dissertations, deposits from member libraries, and active exchange or depository agreements with nearly 100 universities, primarily in Western Europe, the collection was never placed under bibliographic control. The decision not to catalog the dissertations was based on the assumption that depositing libraries would know of the materials they were depositing and that the Center's member libraries also would know of the extensive dissertation collection. Over time, however, institutional memories dimmed. Some members simply forgot about the collection, and without materials identified through a catalog, little use was made of the dissertation collection. In 2002, a benchmark year, use of the dissertation collection was less than two percent of CRL's total collection circulation.

From time to time Center members urged that the collection be placed under bibliographic control, but those recommendations were not acted upon. In 2001, while interim president of the Center, I appointed a Collection Assessment Task Force, chaired by the late Ross Atkinson of Cornell, with members Randall Barry (Library of Congress), Judith Nadler (University of Chicago), Edward Shreeves (University of Iowa), Stephen Wiberley (University of Illinois at Chicago), Melissa Trevvett (CRL), and myself. With generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, the task force worked for nearly a year to find ways to increase the utility and use of the Center's holdings.

The Task Force recognized the importance and uniqueness of the foreign dissertation collection. Using OCLC records and sampling techniques it found that 81 percent of the titles in the collection were held by three or fewer libraries. A major recommendation, and a unanimous one, was that the international dissertation collection be cataloged.

The Center, under the direction of Bernard Reilly, did not ignore that recommendation, but instead acted upon it. The cataloging project now is complete. Bibliographic records go into OCLC WorldCat and records are added to the ProQuest dissertations database. New technologies have enabled the digitization of dissertations to provide electronic access on demand. The Center has been able to ensure the preservation of this major scholarly collection while also making the research reported in the dissertations available to users. Use now is over six percent of the Center's annual circulation.

The Center's foreign dissertations collection is a collection of world wide importance. Comprised of rarely held and rarely used materials—the original purpose of the Center—the dissertations now are now easily accessible to the library and scholarly community. The Center is to be congratulated on its accomplishment and contributions. ❖

Overview of CRL's Dissertation Collection

If we let $G^* = \Omega^{-1} S$, then

$$\Omega \frac{\partial}{\partial x^a} \left(\eta^{ab} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^b} S \right) = \delta^4(a, b)$$

This is simply the flat-space Green function equation, and

hence

$$G^*(\tau_1, 0; \tau_2, \rho) = \frac{\Omega'(\tau_1)}{8\pi} \left[\frac{\delta(\rho - \tau_2 - \tau_1)}{\Omega(\tau_2)\rho} + \frac{\delta(\rho + \tau_2 - \tau_1)}{\Omega(\tau_2)\rho} \right]$$

Hand-written formulas from Stephen Hawking's *Properties of Expanding Universes*, Cambridge, 1965. CRL dissertation collection.

CRL's dissertation collection is an active, circulating collection of non-U.S., non-Canadian doctoral dissertations that numbers almost 800,000. While not comprehensive, it spans almost two centuries of scholarship from more than 1,300 institutions. Its subject matter displays the changing focus of scholarship over time and the relationship of individuals, institutions, and countries within that scholarship. Acquisitions in this collection show the changing nature of the Center as it meets the needs of its members.

The collection ranges from the mid-1800s to the current day. It includes dissertations from more than 115 countries. Germany, with 276, has the largest number of institutions represented. More than 80 languages are represented in the collection. The breakdown by language is as follows: 66 percent German; 16 percent French; 6 percent English; 2 percent Dutch; 1 percent Latin and Swedish; and less than 1 percent for each of the other languages.

The collection was initially formed through deposits from member libraries. A limited number of subscriptions as well as acquisitions through exchange programs added to the collection. In recent years, CRL's Demand Purchase Program—which acquires dissertations, newspapers, and archival materials on demand—has become an important driver of acquisitions as CRL policies and practices have evolved to align more directly with member needs.

The subject areas covered in the collection range from agriculture to women's studies. However, about half of the collection is in science or medicine. Topics in these two subject areas account for about half of the legacy collection. The collection includes 120 dissertations from Nobel laureates and a sizable number by notable scholars such as [Saint Edith Stein](#) (1891–1942), the German-Jewish philosopher, Carmelite nun and Auschwitz victim.

A collection of this size lends itself to historical studies, shedding light on research trends and scholarship over time. For example, it brings to light relationships between individuals, institutions, and countries invested in academic pursuits. It can even provide links between student and teacher such as with Edith Stein: Not only does CRL have her dissertation, the collection also contains dissertations by [Martin Heidegger](#), her fellow graduate student and colleague, [Edmund Husserl](#), one of their teachers and an advisor, and [Carl Stumpf](#), one of his teachers and advisors.

Although the [collection continues to be built](#) through deposits as it was when the collection was begun, providing access to dissertations has changed. CRL's methodology for acquiring dissertations has increasingly focused on acquiring specific titles requested through CRL's [Demand Purchase Program](#) and providing

electronic access to dissertations. CRL has digitized more than [900 dissertations from its collection](#) since the beginning of 2007. The acquisitions staff has also provided links to freely available digital dissertations when members request a title that they were not aware was available digitally.

No matter the current focus of scholarship generating dissertations or the method of acquiring and delivering them for members, providing access to this scholarship is unparalleled. ❖

Some Notable Scholars and Dissertations

The hard copy and microfilm collection occupy more than four miles of shelf space and the microfiche collection of 73,000-plus items fills more than 260 linear feet of drawer space.

Hand-written edits to *Metaphysique Chretienne et Neoplatonisme*, Albert Camus, Algiers, 1936. CRL dissertation collection.

The Foreign Dissertation Collection at CRL contains nearly 800,000 titles, all issued by universities outside of the U.S. and Canada, and is comprised of PhD level dissertations only. The hard copy and microfilm collection occupy more than four miles of shelf space and the microfiche collection of 73,000-plus items fills more than 260 linear feet of drawer space.

The collection holds great historical value due to its breadth and depth. For example, it includes dissertations by 120 scholars who became Nobel laureates, including Albert Einstein, Gustave Hertz, and others. Many of the dissertations are held in only a few overseas libraries. In some cases, such as the dissertation of Werner Arber, 1978 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, CRL holds the only documented copy.

CRL has developed two databases of notable dissertations—one for Nobel laureates and one containing a select group of notable scholars—that have been made accessible through the catalog links below. The dissertations in these databases are circulated in digital form only. The majority of the titles have been scanned; the remaining titles will be scanned upon request. Access to the digital copy for each work is provided through the respective bibliographic record in the CRL catalog. Look for the “e-Resource” link. ❖

[Link to Nobel Laureate Dissertation Database](#)

[Link to Notable Scholars Dissertation Database](#)

LUDWIG KARL VIRCHOW—Notable Scholar Profile

Dissertation title: *De Rheumate Praesertim Corneae*, Universitate Friderica Guilelma, 1843.

Born in Schivelbein, Pomerania in 1821, Virchow studied and taught Anatomy at Wurzburg from 1849–1856. He joined the University at Berlin as a professor of Anatomic Pathology in 1856. Among his many accomplishments were his “omnis cellula e cellula” theory, which traced the origin of cells. He is credited with founding the medical disciplines of Cellular Pathology, Comparative Pathology, and Social Medicine. He died in 1902 of complications from a hip fracture. A short list of additional achievements:

- First to recognize leukemia

- Contributed to refutation of the concept of spontaneous generation
- Worked with gastrointestinal malignancies and lung cancer
- Denounced theories of the superiority of the European “race”
- Served as a politician and worked to improve health care and sanitary conditions.

NICOLAAS BLOEMBERGEN—Nobel Laureate Profile

Dissertation title: *Nuclear Magnetic Relaxation*, Rijksuniversiteit de Leiden, 1948

Nicolaas Bloembergen was born at Dordrecht, Netherlands in 1920. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1945 for graduate studies at Harvard University. There he was assigned to work for graduate advisor Edward M. Purcell who, along with graduate students Henry Torrey and Robert Pond, discovered Nuclear Magnetic Resonance. Bloembergen subsequently developed the first NMR machine. He won the Nobel prize in Physics in 1981, which he shared with Arthur Schawlow and Kai Siegbahn, awarded for work in laser spectroscopy.

FELIX BLOCH—Nobel Laureate Profile

Dissertation title: *Über die Quantenmechanik de Elektronen in Kristallgittern*, Universitat Leipzig, in 1928

Born in Zürich, Switzerland in 1905, Bloch’s early studies were in engineering but evolved to physics. Until 1933, he remained in Germany studying with Werner Heisenberg, Wolfgang Pauli, Niels Bohr, and Enrico Fermi. He left Germany in 1933 and emigrated to the U.S. and Stanford University in 1934. During World War II, Bloch worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory and at Harvard University. After the war, his work centered on nuclear induction and nuclear magnetic resonance, which are the underlying principles of MRI. He and Edward M. Purcell were awarded the 1952 Nobel Prize in Physics.

Changing Patterns of Access

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CRL's Demand Purchase Program enables patrons at member institutions to request purchases up to \$2,000 annually in three areas: foreign dissertations, newspapers, and archival material. CRL attempts to acquire any non-U.S., non-Canadian doctoral dissertation requested by its members. Since the early 1990s, when electronic records were created for this program, CRL has received more than 10,000 requests for dissertations.

In the early years of the Demand Purchase Program, purchasing dissertations could be a time-consuming and frequently unsuccessful process. Changes in worldwide library operations since the beginning of the program have helped increase the fulfillment rate of these requests. Many libraries have digital archives of their dissertations. For dissertations not currently in digital archives, most university libraries have online catalogs and many also contribute records of their dissertation holdings to Worldcat, which makes verification faster and easier. More libraries have an established document delivery or reproduction service, with contact information somewhere on the library's Web site. Online payment also helps speed the process of ordering and fulfillment.

The program now exists in an odd time in terms of accessing the material. On one hand, many libraries are creating open access digital archives to their dissertations. Also, many authors are either posting their dissertations on personal web pages or are happy to provide us with an electronic copy free of charge. On the other hand, many libraries are restricting access. The number of libraries from which we have recently purchased dissertations requiring a Thesis Declaration Form (TDF) or Copyright Declaration (CD) signed by the person requesting the dissertation has increased from two or three to more than 20. Some libraries require that we receive written permission from the author before we can acquire the dissertation. In the past year, we have had to locate 25 authors to do this.

CRL remains committed to the Demand Purchase Dissertation program because it is one of the best ways to ensure that members are able to acquire the material they need for their own scholarship. ❖

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