thought highly of Savile and even sent him a dedication copy of the *Cyclometria elementa* and the *Appendix ad Cyclometria* (printed at the end of 1594) in 1595. In this book Scaliger purported to square the circle and trisect the angle. Unfortunately it was a misconceived gift. The critical annotations by Savile in this copy bear clear evidence that he was far from convinced by the proof provided by Scaliger and pointed out many mistakes of Scaliger in his calculations. The margins of the copy, now in the Bodleian, are full of comprehensive and frequently sarcastic refutations. Was Savile’s negative opinion of Scaliger shared by Bodley? We may never know because Scaliger is not recorded in any of the correspondence of Bodley.

[To be continued]

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TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE PHI COLLECTION, 1882–1945

By Lloyd Houston

Late in his tenure as Bodley’s Librarian, E.W.B. Nicholson received a somewhat unusual letter from Arthur Lionel Smith, Fellow at Balliol College, Oxford. Smith explained that he had been asked to enquire on behalf of a ‘Cambridge don’ whether there existed ‘any Siberia attached to [the] Bodleian Library to which books are banished’ when deemed unsuitable for the general reader. Nicholson knew that just such a literary Gulag did exist, for he had personally overseen its creation. It had been dubbed the ‘Φ’ (Phi) collection, pungently titled to register a ‘Fie!’ of disapproval to those who sought to peruse its contents. Despite having held in its time approximately 2,100 obscene and libellous works, the Phi collection has never been the subject of sustained critical scrutiny, nor does it feature in any of the major published histories of the Bodleian. The present article is intended to offer a detailed, though by

I would like to acknowledge the patience, generosity and diligence of the staff of the Bodleian Library, Weston Library, and the Bodleian Library Records Department, especially Oliver Houseand and Thedora Boorman. I am also indebted to Patrick Kearney for access to his as yet unpublished bibliography of the Phi, and to Liam Sims, who provided valuable information on Cambridge University Library’s Arcana collection. My particular thanks go to Chris Fletcher for drawing the existence of the Phi collection to my attention, and to Giles Bergel and Anique Kruger for their comments on early versions of this article.


3 The exact origins and connotations of the collection’s shelfmark are unclear. While the ‘Φ’ pun is intuitively persuasive, the ‘Φ’ prefix may also derive from the Greek word ‘φασίς’, denoting something ‘paltry’, ‘common’ or ‘evil’. It is possible that in naming the collection Nicholson wryly sought to evoke both resonances. I am grateful to Janet Phillips of the Bodleian Library’s Publishing Department for drawing my attention to this etymological insight. ‘φασίς’, in *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*, www.1gl.uci.edu/lsj, accessed 1 March 2015.

no means definitive, account of the origins, contents and development of the Bodleian's restricted collection from its establishment in the late nineteenth century to the completion of its most substantial restructuring in the middle of the twentieth.

The earliest evidence of the Phi collection resides in the minutes of a meeting of the Curators of the Bodleian, dated 29 April 1882. Item 2(6) on the printed Agenda, under the heading 'Applications from the Librarian', asks for 'leave to submit [the] proposed form of [a] statute respecting [the] issue of improper books'. A manuscript notation indicates that authority was duly granted to Nicholson, who proposed that 'the Librarian be authorised to refuse any book at his discretion to persons who are not M.A.s, unless they have special permission of the Curators'. Two manuscript notes in the earlier of the two Library Records files concerning the collection — one on Bodleian letter-head dated 4 January 1873, the other undated — quote this statute directly, indicating that it continued to serve as the basis for regulating access to Phi materials until the collection was rationalized in 1939. In 1882 Nicholson, who had been appointed to the post only two months earlier, initiated a wholesale expansion of the Bodleian's classification system. He introduced a scheme of around 7,000 sections, carefully differentiated by academic discipline, subject matter and volume size, one of which appears to have been the 'Φ' shelfmark. This supposition is borne out by the first Phi handlist, which is dated 'Jan. 30 1892' in Nicholson's hand, and which was to remain in use until 1927. Nicholson records at the foot of the handlist's title page that any work marked with an asterisk 'is not entered in the General Catalogue' and that a 'slip catalogue of those excluded...


9 The British Museum's equivalent was the 'Suppressed Safe' (S.S.), which came into being in the early twentieth century (Cross, 'Private Case', p. 210).

10 This slip and twenty-eight similar requests, notes and letters of recommendation from tutors are contained in 590/1: Φ 1910-1943.


were not permitted to handle Phi materials. The twenty-nine request slips and letters of support contained in ‘590/1: Φ 1910–1943’ offer a valuable image in microcosm of the development of a range of academic disciplines in Oxford in the first decades of the twentieth century. These requests provide particularly clear insights into the growth of the Honours Schools of English Literature and Experimental Psychology, whose students contribute eighteen of the twenty-six requests for Phi materials made by Oxford undergraduates between 1910 and 1943.

Tellingly, only four of these letters of support concern female students, whose requests often result in lengthy discussions between tutors and librarians over the suitability of the materials in question for women. One such exchange from late September 1917 concerns a request by a student of medieval literature, ‘Miss Robinson’, to view a volume of ‘Folk-lore slave de le [sic] vallée Réssée’ from the Κραττδάς (1883–1911). Upon examining the work in question, Falconer Madan did ‘not feel justified in giving it out unless she brought some testimony that her studies in folklore are serious’.

However, even when presented with a letter of support from the Dean of Balliol, Francis Fortescue Urquhart, identifying her as ‘a very serious student’, Madan remained insinuating. The matter was only settled when Urquhart, in an evident fit of pique, declared that Miss Robinson ‘is quite an elderly lady’ whose ‘moral won’t suffer!’ In April 1926, Christine M.S. Burrows, Principal of the Society of Oxford Home-Studios (which was to become the St Anne’s Society in 1942 and St Anne’s College a decade later), addressed a letter to Arthur Cowley, Bodley’s Librarian, to reassure him that — though listed as an undergraduate — Miss J.K. Jamieson was in fact ‘an Advanced Student’ of ‘mature age’ reading for a DPhil in ‘Medieval & Modern Languages’.

While the paternalism with which Madan and Cowley treat these requests is undoubtedly a by-product of ingrained patriarchal constructions of femininity as a state of naïve innocence, it owes a particular debt to con-

temporary British obscenity legislation. Censorship in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was governed by the 1857 Obscene Publications Act (popularly known as ‘Lord Campbell’s Act’ after its author) and the precedent set by Lord Chief Justice Cockburn’s interpretation of this Act in the 1868 decision of Regina v. Hicklin (the so-called ‘Hicklin Ruling’). Though Campbell’s Act neglected to offer a legal definition of obscenity, its author argued that the Act ‘was intended to apply exclusively to works written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth, and of a nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency in any well regulated mind’. Cockburn’s 1868 decision substituted for this rather nebulous mandate his famous, if no less subjective, ‘test of obscenity’, which required legal officials to determine ‘whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall’.

Both Celia Marshik and Rachel Potter gloss ‘those whose minds are open to such immoral influences’ as denoting ‘the young, the working-class, and women’ (though Hicklin considered his definition to include ‘persons of all classes, young and old’). Read in this light, Madan’s and Cowley’s reluctance to offer female readers access to Phi materials is borne of their awareness of the librarian’s role — and, by extension, legal liability — in regulating into whose hands obscene publications may fall. A similar awareness inscribes itself in the tutors’ insistence that their female students are ‘mature’, academic, and morally robust women, whose minds are, therefore, closed ‘to such immoral influences’ as the Phi might impart.

The Phi collection grew in large part through the Bodleian’s legal deposit accessions, including such controversial works as James Joyce’s Ulysses (1922), the Egoist Press edition of which arrived at the library on 19 December 1922. However, the correspondence contained in ‘590/1:

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15 The most regularly requested items in the Phi collection in this period were the works of Rochester, requested by four students, and volumes of Havelock Ellis’s Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1897–1910), which were requested by five.
16 Κραταδάς, recueil de documents pour servir à l’étude des traditions populaires, 12 vols. (Heilbronn, 1883–1911) [Φ.7 (1–12)].
17 F. Madan to Miss S. Robinson, 21 September 1917, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.
18 E.F. Urquhart to F. Madan, 24 September 1917, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.
19 E.F. Urquhart to F. Madan, 26 September 1917, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.
Bodleian Library Record

Φ 1910–1943 offers evidence of a range of means by which the collection was assembled. One group of letters deals with the transfer of the residua of the British Museum’s ‘Ashbee bequest’ to the Bodleian in 1914. On his death in July 1900, Henry Spencer Ashbee bequeathed the contents of his library (8,764 works in 13,299 volumes) to the British Museum. Of these, around ‘1,000 books in 1,600 volumes’ were deemed by the Keeper of Printed Books, G.K. Fortescue, to be of ‘an erotic or obscene character’ necessitating their placement in the private case. In the process of cataloguing this extensive bequest it became apparent that many of the volumes were duplicates of those already held by the museum, and, in line with Ashbee’s will, these were offered to the Bodleian on 5 March 1914 by Fortescue’s successor, William Barclay Squire. Craster selected a range of works from a list compiled by Squire, and their transfer was approved by the Trustees of the British Museum on 14 March. The chosen books arrived at the Bodleian on 23 March in a case marked ‘Private and Personal’ and were duly shelved in the library. The Bodleian’s willing acceptance of these works demonstrates the library’s commitment to acquiring, conserving and making available to its readers as many texts as possible, irrespective of their perceived obscurity.

A 1925 letter addressed to Arthur Cowley by a British customs official named H.R. Reade indicates the ways in which the Bodleian actively sought to claim works which had been impounded by HM Customs and Excise under Section 42 of the 1872 Customs Consolidation Act. In the letter, Reade responds to a request by Cowley to claim copies of Edward Fuchs’s Geschichte der erotischen Kunst (1908) and Illustrated Erotische Geschichte, vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart (1909–12). Reade concedes that it seems to him ‘a pity to have these volumes destroyed’.


Ibid.

W.B. Squire to H.E.E. Craster, 5 March 1914, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.

W.B. Squire to H.E.E. Craster, 17 March 1914, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.

W. S. Craster to H.E.E. Craster, 23 March 1914, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.


Towards a History of the Phi Collection, 1882–1945

and assures Cowley that they will be despatched to the Bodleian ‘with the approval of [his] board’. Despite this bibliographic pang of conscience, Reade is keen to ensure that any evidence of his department’s complicity in the Bodleian’s acquisition of Fuchs’s obscene works does not appear ‘in any list issued or pasted up for public information’. That the Bodleian was not alone in its efforts to liberate obscene works from the British authorities is reflected in a letter addressed by Alwyn Faber Schofield, Cambridge University Librarian, to Arthur Cowley in February 1929. Schofield informs Cowley that he has ‘written to New Scotland Yard in the hope of obtaining two copies of [Norah C.] James: Sleeveless Errand’ – one for the Bodleian, the other for Cambridge – and states that William Kirk Dickson has requested a copy for the National Library of Scotland. Schofield believes it ‘unlikely that the Police will yield to the request’ and asks Cowley to ‘add [Oxford’s] voice’ to those of Cambridge and Edinburgh in demanding a copy. James’s freshly published novel had been seized by plain-clothes officers across Britain in a co-ordinated sting only a week before and would be found guilty of obscene libel the following month. This swift and co-ordinated effort by several of the UK’s copyright libraries to claim copies of an obscene text while it remained in a state of legal limbo further emphasizes the seriousness of their commitment to their responsibilities as legal deposit collections. More significantly, it suggests the ways in which they exploited this legal duty as a means by which to protect contentious works from destruction. This desire to operate as independent mediators between the institutional mechanisms of avant-garde publishing and the British legal establishment is an as yet under-explored reflection of and contributing factor in the growing professionalization of librarianship in Britain.

Unfortunately, in spite of this rapid response, Cowley’s request to secure a copy of James's


Bodleian Library Record

novel - communicated to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in a letter of 2 March - was itself a ‘sleeveless errand’.\textsuperscript{\text{35}} The Bodleian only succeeded in acquiring James’s novel in 1960, when a copy of the first Paris edition, inscribed with the author’s compliments, was shelved at ‘25012 e.1323’.\textsuperscript{\text{37}} Nevertheless, Cowley’s efforts demonstrate that, if it had once constituted a bibliographic ‘Siberia’, by the first decades of the twentieth century the Phi had also come to offer an ark within which avant-garde writing could weather the storms of obscenity prosecutions and customs seizures.\textsuperscript{\text{38}}

Further evidence of covert cooperation between the Bodleian and the British government in the Library’s acquisition of Phi materials is offered in a 1929 letter from the British Institute in Florence. In it, the Secretary of the Institute responds to a request from Cowley for a copy of Lady Chatterley’s Lover (1928) which had been forwarded to the Institute by a ‘Mr Gazelee [sic] of the Foreign Office’.\textsuperscript{\text{39}} The Secretary offers Cowley a ‘copy of the 1st edition, signed for £10-10-0 less 10%’ or the ‘Paris edition’, printed from ‘a photographic reproduction, for 13/– or 14/–'.\textsuperscript{\text{40}} Cowley appears to have purchased both copies, which were brought from Florence to the Bodleian in the diplomatic bag by Stephen Gaselee, Librarian and Keeper of the Papers of the Foreign Office, on 14 November.\textsuperscript{\text{41}} As these examples indicate, the holdings of the

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Towards a History of the Phi Collection, 1882–1945

Phi collection represent a significant record of the British government’s ambivalent attitude towards its own censorship mechanisms in the first decades of the twentieth century. The history of the Phi collection thus complicates traditional narratives of British modernism in which authors and publishers grapple heroically with a reactionary censor, presenting a more nuanced image in which government officials and library staff co-operated to mitigate the worst excesses of contemporary obscenity legislation.

The Library Records files also reveal the Bodleian to have been extremely conscious of the potential impact that press coverage of Phi and its contents might have had on the Library’s public image. This is reflected by the presence in ‘590/1: Φ 1910–1943’ of a copy of ‘The Taboos of the British Museum Library’ by E.S.P. Haynes, which had featured in the December 1933 issue of the English Review.\textsuperscript{\text{42}} Haynes’s polemic, the first article publicly to address the existence of a restricted collection in a prominent UK library, denounced the private case as an apparatus of censorship and excoriated the British Museum for its perceived moral timidity in deferring to an ‘eclesiastical’ belief that ‘intellectual curiosity is sinful in itself’.\textsuperscript{\text{43}} The file also contains seven newspaper articles pertaining to the Phi collection and its most prominent British analogues, gathered for the Bodleian by Durrant’s Press Cuttings’ between 1928 and 1937.\textsuperscript{\text{44}} One is a ‘Letter to the Editor’ taken from the June 1937 issue of Oxford’s weekly student magazine, Isis. In it, ‘S. Dell’, an undergraduate at Queen’s College, expresses his outrage at having been asked to secure the permission of his tutor before viewing the Bodleian’s copy of Volume V of “The Psychology of Sex” by Havelock Ellis.\textsuperscript{\text{45}} For Dell, this ‘ridiculous example of narrow-mindedness’ and ‘fantastic anti-quarianism’ betrays an ‘attitude to sex’ which serves only to ‘make it an object of unholy curiosity’.\textsuperscript{\text{46}} Ironically, Dell demurely neglects to give the volume in question its full title, Erotic Symbolism, The Mechanism of Detumescence, The Psychic State in Pregnancy (1906), though the editors

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\textsuperscript{\text{35}} A printed acknowledgement of receipt on New Scotland Yard letter-head signed by H.M. Howgrave-Graham, Secretary of the Metropolitan Police, confirms that Cowley addressed a letter to the Commissioner on 2 March. Though the letter’s contents are unknown, the fact that it was sent within two days of Schoffield’s request for assistance suggests that it must have concerned James’s novel: H.M. Howgrave-Graham to A.E. Cowley, 4 March 1929, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 910–1943.

\textsuperscript{\text{37}} Norah C. James, Sleeveless Errand: A Novel (Paris, 1929). An undated black ink manuscript inscription on the flyleaf, initialed by the publisher, Henry Babou, presents the volume ‘[w]ith the author’s compliments’. The reverse of its fly-title bears its ‘4 July 1960’ accession stamp.

\textsuperscript{\text{39}} I explore the ways in which modernist authors and British librarians exploited the legal deposit mechanisms of the 1911 Imperial Copyright Act to circumvent British obscenity legislation in greater detail in Lloyd Houston, ‘Illegal Deposits: ‘The Library’ and the Copyright Libraries’, The Library (forthcoming).

\textsuperscript{\text{42}} Secretary (British Institute of Florence) to A.E. Cowley, 10 October 1929, Bodleian Library, 590/1: Φ 1910–1943.


\textsuperscript{\text{45}} Haynes, ‘Taboos’, p. 133.


\textsuperscript{\text{47}} Dell, ‘Innocence’, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{\text{48}} Ibid.
Bodleian Library Record

of the Isis playfully offer their correspondent use of 'the office copy for a trifling fee'. 46 This outburst of undergraduate ire was seized upon two days later by the Daily Mirror, who printed quotations from the Isis article under the headline 'VARSITY LACKS SEX SENSE' (11 June 1937). Dell's letter, and the tabloid interest it garnered, reflect the ways in which the Phi and comparable restricted collections were associated in the contemporary popular imagination with an increasingly outmoded form of prudishness. This position had already been expressed in articles in The Times of India and The Irish Times, the latter emphasizing the futility and apparent ridiculousness of the Bodleian's restrictions on access to Rochester's works by rhetorically demanding to know 'what English reader has not seen a banned copy of James Joyce's Ulysses?' (24 November 1928).

These journalistic laments over the apparent 'narrow-mindedness' of the Bodleian were paralleled by academic attempts to catalogue and historicize Phi and its contents so as to render them legitimate objects of critical scrutiny. Evidence of these efforts can be found in the successful applications for access made by Alfred Rose, a bibliographer of erotica, in 1933 and Alexander George (Alec) Craig, a literary historian and free-speech advocate, in 1942. Rose, whose application was endorsed in a letter by Charles Grant Robertson, Fellow of All Souls College and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, was conducting research for his monumental Registrum librorum eroticorum (1936). The Registrum drew on a range of existing bibliographies to present an (occasionally inaccurate) index of over 5,000 erotic works in English, French, Italian and German, with their corresponding shelfmarks in the Bodleian, the British Museum and a range of major European libraries. 47 Although Rose died before the work could be properly proofread, it was published in 1936 in a limited edition of 200 copies under the pseudonym 'Rolf S. Reade'. Craster not only approved Rose's application, but subscribed to a copy of the Registrum, which joined the ranks of the Phi collection on 2 July 1936. 48 Craig's scholarly credentials were vouchsafed by W.A. Marsden, Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum Library, who introduced him to Craster as a 'serious student' and the author of a recent polemical study of the Banned Books of England (1937). 49 By March 1942 Craig was engaged in the final stages of research for a second broadside, Above All Liberties, which he published later that year. Although violently opposed to censorship in all its guises – particularly what he characterized as the British Museum Library's insidious policy of suppressing private case works by omitting them from its General Catalogue – Craig was in fact largely sympathetic to the Bodleian's more measured handling of obscene material, wryly commending its 'witty' choice of admonitory symbol. 50 This willingness to facilitate both a bibliographical catalogue and an ideological critique of the Bodleian's restricted collection reflects an impulse towards greater transparency and accessibility on Caster's part that was to be given tangible expression in a range of reforms undertaken between 1937 and 1945.

The resulting restructuring of Phi was principally the brain-child of Stephen G. Wright, Assistant Secretary to Bodley's Librarian, who by the late 1930s had come to regard the collection as overcrowded and out of step with contemporary social mores. On 3 December 1937 he wrote to W.A. Marsden at the British Museum Library and H.C. Stanford, Secretary of Cambridge University Library, to discuss best practice in the operation of restricted collections. Wright offered both officials a revealing outline of Phi's contents, which he described as 'a rather heterogeneous collection' roughly divisible into three categories:

1. Works on sexual pathology and physiology whose outspokenness or illustrations make it undesirable for them to be generally accessible.
2. Obscene literature in general, ranging from certain translations of Petronius and the Arabian Nights [sic] to Ulysses [sic] and Lady Chatterley's Lover [sic].
3. Drawings and photographs of nudes and similar subjects, application for which would be inspired by pornographic (or very occasionally artistic) interest.

48 Rolf S. Reade (Alfred Rose), Registrum librorum eroticorum vel (sub haec specie) librorum: opus bibliographicum et praecipue bibliothecarii destinatum, 2 vols. (London, 1936). The Bodleian's copy is numbered '[s]et of series', with its accession date stamped on the flyleaf of the first volume. It was shelved at ff d.214, and is now at 2386095 d.8/4. That the Bodleian had subscribed for its copy is confirmed in a letter to Craster from Joseph Hanna, the Assistant Librarian of Trinity College, Dublin; J. Hanna to H.E. Craster, 8 May 1936, Bodleian Library, 590/1: ff 1910–1943.
49 W.A. Marsden to H.E. Craster, 30 March 1942, Bodleian Library, 590/1: ff 1910–1943.
Wright explained that he wished to ascertain how these materials were handled at the 'other principal libraries', as the Bodleian was considering a 'reclassification' with implications for the 'degree of accessibility' of Phi works. The following day Stanford replied, informing him that Cambridge handled the contents of its 'Arc (Arcana)' collection in a virtually identical manner, with a requirement that all 'undergraduates' and 'dubious applicants' provide a letter of support for their requests. Successful applicants were able to view 'Arc' materials in the 'Anderson Room', a reading room for rare books and manuscripts, with borrowing rights extended only to 'serious graduate students' who requested sexological works. Stanford emphasized that 'nude drawings and photographs were entirely restricted to the library, as when borrowed by students they had previously tended to be returned 'adorned' with what he euphemistically dubbed 'phallic additions'.

Marsden was unwilling to 'put anything down in writing' concerning the private case, and instead invited Wright to visit the British Museum and witness its operation for himself. Wright undertook this fact-finding mission on 4 January 1938, summarizing its outcomes in a typed report composed four days later. Wright's report highlights the 'vagueness and inconsistency' that govern the classification and accessibility of works in the private case, the handling of which appears 'more lax' than the practices of either the Bodleian or Cambridge. It notes that 'moral considerations are not taken into account as a rule' and that the 'preservation of the book rather than of readers' morals is the guiding factor' of private case accessions. Thus, while the refusal to list private case holdings in the General Catalogue was intended to discourage frivolous applications, Wright emphasizes that the British Museum otherwise tried its best to facilitate public access to 'national property'. Marsden explained to Wright that this policy was possible because the British Museum was not obliged 'to keep any class of book from any particular type of reader', the majority of whom were 'at least twenty-one years old'. In contrast,

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S. G. Wright, 'Summary of conversation with the Keeper of Printed Books, the Superintendent of the Reading Room and other (in) officials at the British Museum on Tuesday 4 January 1938', 8 January 1938, Bodleian Library, 590/2: Φ 1937–1949.

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Towards a History of the Phi Collection, 1882–1945

Wright implies, the Bodleian had a duty of care over its undergraduate readers which must inform its access policies.

On the basis of this visit Wright proposed a wholesale reclassification and reshelving of Phi materials, intended to reduce the collection to its 'quintessence' and maximise readers' access to all but the most obscene, fragile or legally dubious works. He outlined his proposals in two sets of typed recommendations which he circulated on 17 January and 21 February 1938. Perhaps in deference to the consistent journalistic outrage at the restriction of works by Havelock Ellis, Wright suggested that 'scientific texts on the physiology and psychology of sex, including birth-control and nudism' be reshelved in the Radcliffe Science Library. Unillustrated literary works were to be transferred to the relevant fiction sections, where they could be issued to readers at the Librarian's discretion. 'Valuable limited editions' whose text 'may or may not be to some extent obscene' or whose illustrations 'have hitherto been regarded as improper' were to be reshelved in 'Arch. Bodl. D', a shelfmark already employed for 'fine editions, not generally required for consultation'. All but the most 'gross' nude studies were likewise to return to 'their ordinary sections', though collections of drawings 'obscene in subject or treatment' would remain in the Phi. The equivocal tone of Wright's heavily qualified remarks ('may or may not', 'to some extent', 'hitherto') offers some indication of the progressive impulse governing the proposed reclassification, even as it attests to the inherent instability of the category of obscenity.

Wright's 'Supplementary Recommendations', dated 21 February, dealt with the practical implications of this reclassification for the Bodleian. They note that the use of Arch. Bodl. D to house the majority of Phi's contemporary contents may necessitate the relocation of the section. Likewise, Wright states that '[s]tricter control' of access to Arch. Bodl. D will entail a revision of the Bodleian's Staff Manual to ensure that works in Arch. Bodl. D, E, and F are fetched only by a Senior Assistant who must be satisfied as to the reader's qualifications for using them. The contents of the 'Reserved' section were to be reduced only to works which had been 'specifically withdrawn by the publisher' or 'confiscated as obscene or libellous' by the authorities. Those works which retained their 'Φ' shelfmark were only to be issued 'with the written approval of the Librarian'. Wright also proposed that books in the reconstituted

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All requests for fiction by students 'below the degree of M.A.' had to be 'initialled by the Librarian or Sub-librarian in charge' (Staff Manual, 1923, p. 44).

Phi and Reserved collections ‘should not be entered in the general catalogue’, though in an autograph pencil notation Wright records that he is ‘doubtful on second thoughts of the wisdom of this’ policy. This anxiety was to persist until 1942, when a manuscript pencil note from Wright to an unnamed recipient indicates that it ‘was ultimately decided that Φ (but not Res.) should go into the Catalogue’, though Wright cannot locate the written authorization for this decision. In order to avoid the necessity of a future large-scale reclassification, Wright proposes that the contents of the Reserved and Phi sections be reviewed ‘not less often than every five years’ and redistributed ‘where possible’. Wright’s first set of recommendations appears to have received the assent of Edmund Craster, Bodley’s Librarian, on 31 August 1939. A red ink manuscript notation to Wright’s recommendations in Craster’s hand expresses his general approval of the proposals, though he reminds the Secretary that the expansion of Arch. Bodl. D will have to await its transfer to the stacks of the recently completed New Bodleian.

Craster’s desire to ensure that the new access procedures governing Arch. Bodl. D were followed is reflected in a pair of typed memoranda dated 14 June 1940. The first calls the attention of the staff to the revised sections of the 1938 Staff Manual concerning the shelfmark. The second outlines the new responsibilities of a senior assistant when dealing with Arch. Bodl. D requests. Assistants were now required to verify that the reader’s needs could not be met by ‘another copy or edition’ of the work from a non-restricted section, to ensure that the work was required ‘for a serious purpose’, and to fetch and replace the book personally. Orders for works from the newly distilled Phi collection were to be handled by the senior sub-librarian, whose responsibility it was to ‘enter them in a special register’. As such, it may be inferred that by at least 1940 the Phi collection had been extensively pruned, and a ‘Secondary Φ’ (Arch. Bodl. D) established. The access procedures for these collections had been formalized so as to resemble more closely those of the British Museum, with a written application required for all requests, irrespective of the reader’s academic status. However, unlike the British Museum, the majority of the Bodleian’s restricted holdings remained openly listed in the General Catalogue, ensuring a more consistent and transparent service than that offered by the national collection.

A typed memorandum circulated by Stephen Wright the following month offers a fuller account of the progress of the reclassification effort, noting that Arch. Bodl. D has been successfully relocated to ‘the grilled shelves in the New Library’. While this new location affords the possibility of ‘further growth’, Wright nevertheless advocates renewed ‘pruning’. The reconstituted Phi and Reserved collections were to be kept in Bodley ‘(presumably the Old Library) under Secretarial charge’, emphasizing the extent to which oversight of the Phi had by this point become Wright’s personal province. The keys and handlists for these collections were to be kept in a locked drawer in the study of Wright’s superior, R.H. Hill, Secretary of the Bodleian, and made accessible only to ‘Library Officers and to the Under-Secretary’. A manuscript memorandum composed in a new hand and dated 9 April 1943 indicates that after three years the reshelving process was nearing completion.

The transfer of sexological works to the Radcliffe Science Library had been successfully completed, as had the transfer of limited editions and illustrated works of fiction to Arch. Bodl. D. The return of unillustrated mass-market editions to their relevant fiction sections had met with limited success, with only ‘three or four’ suitable works having been located in Phi. Intriguingly, the author expresses concern regarding the impression given in Wright’s memoranda that the contents of reconstituted Phi are, by definition, ‘wholly obscene’. The author notes that were a member of public to be informed that the works of a given publisher held in Phi were ‘regarded as obscene’ by the Bodleian, a case could be brought by the publisher in which a ‘civil court might cast the Library in heavy damages for defamation’. These reflections are presented as an argument for greater consistency in the management of Phi’s contents and greater caution in their description, but they nevertheless raise prickly questions regarding what is legally at stake in the act of classification. The final item to feature chronologically in ‘590/2: Φ 1937–1949’ is a manuscript note by the same author, dated ‘July 1945’ which states, perhaps fittingly, that,
though 'Arch. A – D' have been 'reclassified and rehandedlist', the Phi collection has been 'left for further consideration'.

While necessarily provisional, this account of the collection's origins and development is intended not only to offer a snapshot of a hitherto undocumented facet of the Bodleian's institutional life, but to indicate the extensive opportunities that the Phi collection affords for future research into the transmission and reception of a wide range of literary and non-literary texts. In doing so it offers the possibility not only to chart the mechanisms through which obscene works were acquired and made available to readers by the Bodleian, but to analyse the conditions under which the category of obscenity itself was being constructed and contested in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As in 1945, Phi thus remains ripe for 'further consideration'.

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NOTABLE ACCESSIONS

FRANCESCA GALLIGAN writes:

STAR ATLAS

Josephine Edle von Ranlom's *Ausblick zu den Sternen-Welten* (Vienna, Schaumburg und Compagnie, 1846) appears to be the first star atlas written by a woman primarily for a female audience, and at a time when few women undertook serious astronomical study. It contains fifty-three striking lithographic star maps of constellations visible to the naked eye, based on the author's own observations. The title page includes portraits of Copernicus, Galilei, Kepler and Brahe, and the work is influenced by Johann Bode's *Uranographia* (1801) and Johann Heinrich Westphal's translation of Piazzi's *Lezioni elementari di astronomia* (1817, 1822).

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EARLY RECIPE BOOKS

Since acquiring Bent Juel-Jensen's collection of the works of Hugh Plat following his death in 2006, our holdings of this Elizabethan writer have been pre-eminent. *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen*, and Plat's *Delights for Ladies* (both London, [by H. Lownes] for John Parker, 1624) add to our collections two rare editions of these culinary and medicinal recipes: only one other copy of this edition of the *Closet* and two of the *Delights* are recorded in ESTC. They survive here bound together in the seventeenth century, and an inscription shows the volume was being used by a medical scholar as late as 1732. This purchase was supported by the Friends of the Bodleian.

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THE ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE LATE SIMON DIGBY

ALASDAIR WATSON writes:

In April 2015, the Trustees of the Simon Digby Memorial Trust deposited a large collection of Oriental manuscripts belonging to the late Simon Digby (1932–2010) with the Special Collections Department of the Bodleian with the intention that it should become a donation to the Library.

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68 'Scheme for reclassification of Φ and Archives', July 1945, Bodleian Library, 590/2; Φ 1937–1949.