

T.W. Mussen: Identifying and Analysing a Hidden Collection

Svetlana Kochkina
McGill University
Library





“Hidden Collections” in Academic Libraries

- ARL Task Force on Hidden Collections 2001-2006
- T.W. Mussen collection, a perfect example of “hidden collection”
 - ✓ risk of items being lost
 - ✓ inaccessibility to wider scholarly community
 - ✓ manual finding aides underutilized by inexperienced researchers
 - ✓ staff-dependent local access
 - ✓ wear of physical items
 - ✓ exclusion from retrospective conversion projects

Collection History

T.W. Mussen (1832-1901)

- Studied at McGill and Bishop's Universities
- Tour to Europe 1856-1858
- Rector at West Farnham at 1859
- Successful parochial work
- "A man of culture and erudition"

Borthwick, J. Douglas. *History of the Diocese of Montreal*

T.W. Mussen collection at McGill

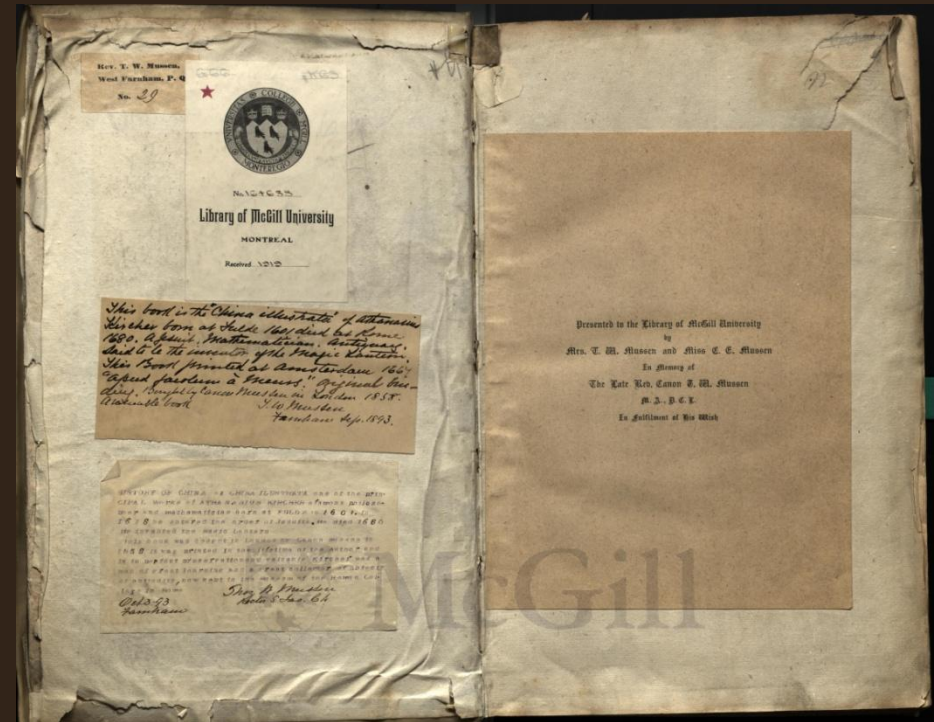
- 1919 – collection of books, prints, and Roman and Greek coins donated to McGill
- "An exceptional gift" "Notable Gifts to M'Gill Library."

Montreal Gazette, 15 February 1919



Why Mussen Collection?

- Unique and valuable items: old master prints, early printed books
- Subject-focused
- Theology, Church History, Ancient History, Architecture
- Latin, English, Greek
- Evidence of bibliographic research and constant interest in book collecting



T.W. Mussen Prints

Old master prints:

Albrecht Dürer

- The four horsemen of the Apocalypse

Cornelis Galle

- Christ as a child carrying the instruments of His Crucifixion

Lucas von Cranach

- Christ and the Woman of Samaria

Anthony van Dyck

- Christ with the crown of thorns

Rembrandt

- Portrait of Petrus van Tol

Sebald Beham

- Prodigal son

Lucas van Leyden

- Sainte Madeleine

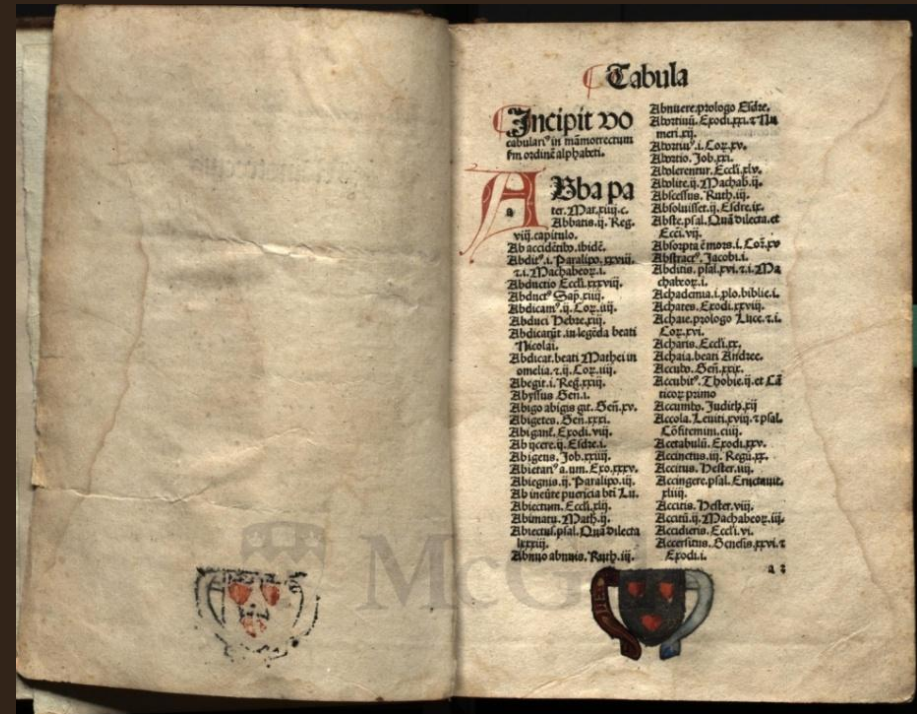


T.W. Mussen Books

Early printed books (mostly 16th and 17 century)

7 incunabula

- Decretum / Gratianus, folio 1472
- Epistolae / Saint Ambrose, 1490
- De consolatione philosophiae / Boethius, 1486
- Mammotrectus super Bibliam, 1487
- Compendium de origine et gestis Francorum / Gaguinus, 1497
- Vita St. Augustini / Ambrosius, 1481
- Sixto III. Pon. Max. Ambrosii Choriolani, Gen. Augustianorum, in defensiorium / Ambrosius, 1481





Goal of the Project

Identify, describe, analyse, and make accessible to the public a 'hidden collection' of rare prints and early books donated to McGill Library by T.W. Mussen



Objectives of the Project

Phase 1:

- identify all the prints and books belonging to the T.W. Mussen collection
- compile an inventory of the collection

Phase 2:

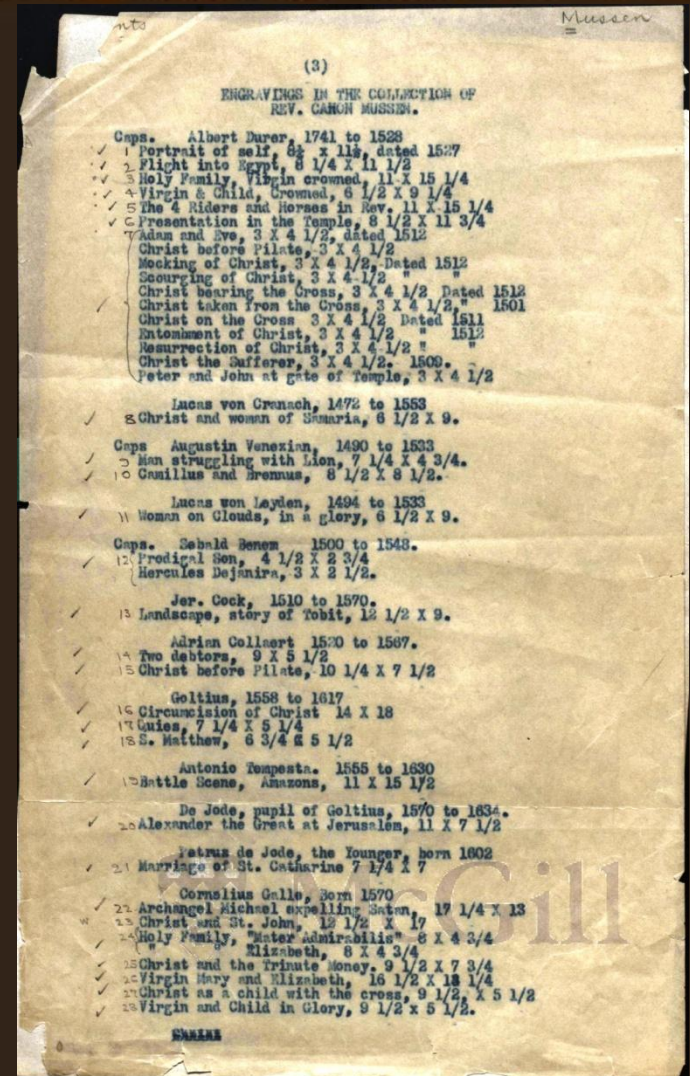
- investigate the history of the items in the collection
- analyse & describe the collection as a whole
- describe individual items

Phase 3:

- prepare a catalogue of the collection for publication
- create a digital exhibition / website

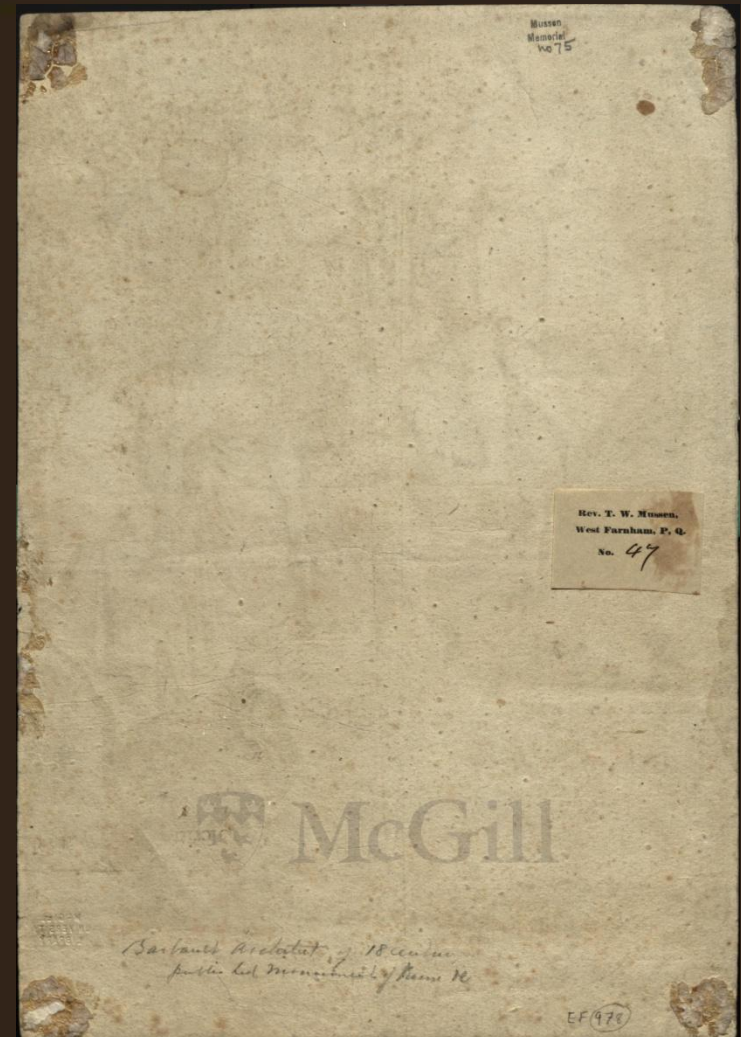
Initial Access to the Collection : Prints

- No comprehensive list of donated prints
- No records in online catalogue
- Some prints listed in “European prints” typewritten catalogue
- Carbon copy of Mussen Memorial list - no links to the physical items



Identification Process : Prints

- Finding prints from Mussen Memorial list in “European prints” catalogue - abandoned due to:
 - ad hoc organisation
 - donors traced randomly
 - discrepancies in Mussen Memorial prints list and in European prints catalogue
 - large number of uncatalogued prints
- Mussen prints labelled (most) and stamped (all)
- Decision to examine the whole section of European prints in RBSC
 - ✓ 1,605 catalogued
 - ✓ more than 900 uncatalogued prints





Results Phase One : Prints

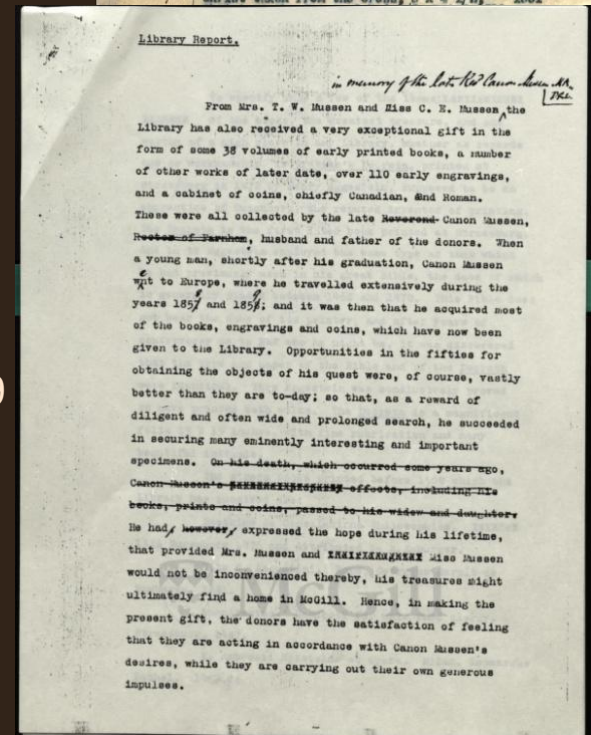
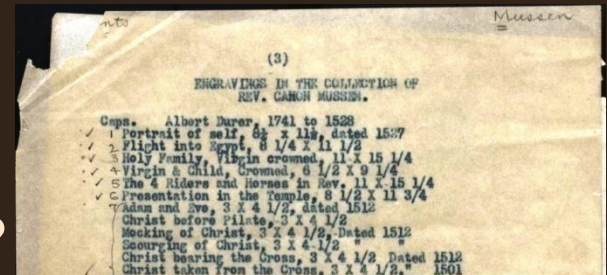
- Comprehensive list of all Mussen prints following Mussen Memorial list order:
 - ✓ 97 prints from the Mussen Memorial list
 - ✓ 14 prints not included in the Mussen Memorial list
 - ✓ 17 prints identified as missing
- Authority work (creators' names, dates, prints' titles)
- Mylar protective enclosures

Initial Access to the Collection : Books

- No list of donated books
- No total number of donated books
- Accession registers initially unavailable for consultation
- Only 16 books in online catalogue with T.W. Mussen in notes
- T.W. Mussen traced as a donor in 2 records only
- Small binder with 46 old typewritten or handwritten 3 x 5 cards

Identification Process : Books

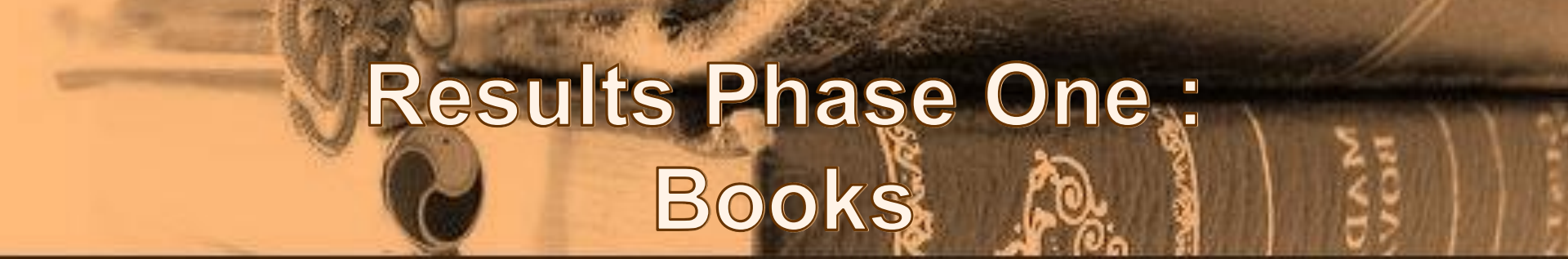
- Finding titles from binder in online catalogue – 4 more books
- Mussen Memorial list starts at page 3 ???
Pages 1-2 - list of books?
- McGill Archives to find missing pages:
 - ✓ Incoming correspondence 1917-1920
 - ✓ Library outgoing letters books 1917-1920
 - ✓ Library Annual and Quarterly Reports 1917-1919
 - ✓ University Annual Reports 1918-1919
 - ✓ Library Committees Minute book 1919
 - ✓ Miscellanea files 1917-1919
 - ✓ General administrative files 1917-1919



Identification Process : Books

- McGill Archives:
 - ✓ Books were donated in 3 batches
 - ✓ Type-written list of the 1st donation batch existed
 - ✓ Lists of books included in 2nd (21 books) and 3rd (9 books) accessions
 - ✓ Total number of donated books – **76**

- Comparing information found in:
 - Archival documents
 - 3 x 5 cards' binder
 - McGill online catalogue
 - RBSC card catalogue
 - Library accession register



Results Phase One : Books

- All 76 titles donated to McGill Library identified
- Comprehensive list of all Mussen books
 - ✓ 69 in RBSC collection
 - ✓ 7 not found yet
- Authority work (creators' names, dates, titles)
- Provenance confirmed by examining physical items (accession number, T.W. Mussen memorial plate, signature, or label)



What is next?

All objectives of Phase 1 are met:

- ✓ Intellectual access
- ✓ Physical access

Objectives Phase 2 & 3:

- investigate the history of the items in the collection (place, time of acquisition, etc.)
- analyse & describe the collection
- describe individual items, i.e. provide analytical bibliographic description for the books and referenced description of the prints
- prepare a catalogue of the collection for publication (funding?)
- create a digital exhibition / website (funding?)



In Parentheses

“A library represents the mind of its collector, his fancies and foibles, his strength and weakness, his prejudices and preferences. Particularly is this the case if, to the character of a collector, he adds - or tries to add - the qualities of a student who wishes to know the books and the lives of the men who wrote them.” (William Osler, Bibliotheca Osleriana from “The Librarian's Book of Quotes”)

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Questions ?

Thank you!

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