

What is IFLA?

IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) is the leading international body representing the interest of library and information services and their users. Established in 1927, IFLA was one of the first non-profit making, non-governmental organizations to further the cause of librarianship.

Its primary function is to promote international understanding, cooperation, discussion, research and development in all aspects of library activity, and to share its findings with the library community all over the world. Today IFLA is present in more than 150 countries. Each year IFLA organizes an international conference, the *World Library and Information Congress*.

The objectives and professional activities of IFLA aim at universal application and comprehensiveness. To facilitate its work, the organization is structured in two types of units:

- five Divisions with professional groups of Sections and Discussion Groups, organized by type of library or library activity;
- six Core Activities: Action for Development through Libraries Programme (ALP), Committee on Copyright and other Legal Matters (CLM), Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE), IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards (ICABS), Preservation and Conservation (PAC), and UNIMARC.

In pursuing its objectives, IFLA supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "everyone has the right to participate freely in the culture of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits".

IFLA Membership

Membership in IFLA is open to associations and institutions; affiliation is available for individuals. For further information on joining IFLA and registering for the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, contact:

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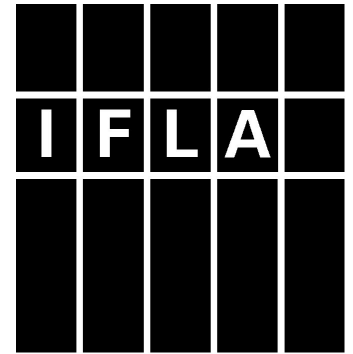
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Or go to the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section homepage:
<http://www.ifla.org/en/rare-books-and-manuscripts/>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section



Rare Books and Manuscripts

Rare books and manuscripts are part of the global cultural heritage. Their significance as intellectual creations, historic collections, and *objets d'art* exceed boundaries of language, state or period. Scholars, librarians, book and art historians, bibliophiles, and library users from all over the world read, study, and admire them. Special collections preserve these treasures with great care. They are the sources of history, the evidence that can be interrogated by new researchers who ask their own questions. Through archives and publications, previous generations speak to us with original voices.

Scope of the Section

The IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information on matters of particular concern to rare book and manuscript librarians in all types of libraries, including the collection, preservation, digitization, bibliographic control, and use of such materials, and the management and marketing of special collections departments.

The Section monitors new developments and provides information to its members through a twice-yearly newsletter, programmes at IFLA Annual World Library and Information Congresses, and RBMS workshops. It supports the progress of professional projects. Currently 118 institutions and associations are members of the Section. Business is conducted through an international Standing Committee of up to 20 members, who meet at IFLA General Conferences. The Section has a tradition of fruitful cooperation with the Sections for Preservation and Conservation, Art Libraries and Special interest group Library History.

General Goals of the Section

- Promote the understanding of the significance of rare books, manuscripts, and archives for scholarly research, and as part of the heritage of civilization, in an international context.
- Develop international standards in the field of rare book and manuscript librarianship, and publish directories and bibliographies which will assist rare book and manuscript librarians in their work.

Projects and plans

Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries (ABHB)

Under the auspices of the Section a new volume of ABHB has been issued each year from 1970 on. The Dutch National Library is the General Editor. Since 2001 an electronic version, Book History Online, is available at www.kb.nl/bho.

Digitization activities

The section provides a forum for sharing experience and expertise in digitization projects of rare books and manuscripts, especially with regard to standards and formats, selection, editorial control, access, users feedback, copyright, preservation, funding and partnerships.

Guidelines for exhibition loans

In 2004 the Section published the brochure *Guidelines for Exhibition Loans*. It contains principles and best practices based on a recent survey of the loan policies of leading libraries in Europe and North America.

Inventory of international activities

An inventory of international organizations and projects in the field of Rare Books and Manuscripts can be found on the Section's website.

UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The Section underlines the importance of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, which aims at safeguarding the documentary heritage of humanity, by contributing to the visibility of this programme and by actively supporting the IFLA representative at the Memory of the World Register Subcommittee.

Advocacy

The section also aims to raise awareness for security issues concerning rare materials and for improving access to hidden collections.

Conferences

A pre-conference and session were organized in Durban, 2007, in cooperation with the Preservation and Conservation Section, on cultural heritage in African libraries. In Québec in 2008, the conference session focussed on *Expanding frontiers of knowledge: documents of exploration, discovery and travel*. In 2009, the section held a satellite meeting in Munich, Germany, on *Early printed books as material objects*; the congress session in Milan was about *Dispersed cultural collections. Preservation, reconstruction and access*. In 2010 the congress in Göthenburg will be devoted to *Reconstructing libraries : physical evidence for the history of libraries and collections* and a satellite meeting is proposed in Uppsala with the Preservation and Conservation Section on *New techniques to assist with conservation*.

Future conference sites

2010 Göthenburg, Sweden
2011 San Juan, Puerto Rico
2012 Helsinki, Finland