

**Nomination Form
International Memory of the World Register**

BODMER LIBRARY

2014-48

1.0 Abstract (max 200 words)

With over 150,000 manuscripts, printed books, drawings and archeological pieces, the Bodmer Library is the result of nearly a century of acquisitions and research conducted by the creator of the collection, Martin Bodmer, between 1916 and 1971: this exceptional bibliophile was able to materialize – a unique case in the world – Goethe’s concept of “*Weltliteratur*” by compiling, among others, prestigious copies, ancient and rare, of big names in literature, religion, history or science. This “spiritual bastion” has become the refuge of an impressive procession of authors and immortal texts from all major civilizations since the dawn of writing until the twentieth century.

2.0 Author

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Martin Bodmer Foundation – Library and Museum

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Owner

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

- Prof. Jacques Berchtold, Director of the Foundation
- M. Nicolas Ducimetière, Vice-director of the Foundation

2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Adresse</i>
Prof. Jacques Berchtold	Fondation Martin Bodmer, 19-21, route Martin-Bodmer, CH-1223 Cologny (Genève), Switzerland

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3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

With over 150,000 manuscripts, printed books and archaeological finds, the Bodmer Library is the result of nearly a century of acquisitions and research conducted by the creator of the collection, Martin Bodmer, between 1916 and 1971, thus constituting a unique example of concrete implementation of Goethe's concept of "Weltliteratur." The Foundation, through which the collection was perpetuated, pursues its work until the present time.

This collection, the work of a demanding and visionary bibliophile, has been built around Goethe's concept of "Weltliteratur" (ie: universal literature), summarized by Martin Bodmer in these terms: "embrace man in his totality, history such as it reflects the spiritual creation across all ages and in all parts of the world (...). By Weltliteratur, I hear all the creations of the human mind, insofar as they are manifested in writing and have played a crucial role on the place and time of their appearance, [in short] every creation of the human genius that has overcome the sphere and the time of its origin."

In order to achieve this, the Bodmer Library was organized on five key "pillars", the Bodmerian "Pentagon": Homer (representing pagan antiquity), the Bible (Christian antiquity), Dante (the Middle Ages), Shakespeare (Renaissance) and Goethe (modern times). A secondary classification was proposed to strengthen these pillars and included four main themes of human civilization: faith (Glaube, the religious and spiritual texts), power (Macht, the political and legal writings), art (Kunst) and knowledge (Wissen, the scientific treatises). Far from being ethnocentric, the Bodmer Library had the ambition to host the testimony of the largest number of civilizations spanning five thousand years of history (from the Mesopotamian tablets or pharaonic papyrus to the novels of the American School, dating from the post-war period). It brings together scripts written in over 80 languages, including hieroglyphics or cuneiform system, most modern or dead European languages, but also Hebrew and Aramaic, Chinese and Japanese, Algonquin, Sanskrit, Slavonic, Aztec, etc..

The documents held by the Bodmer Library are very diverse in nature:

- The collection of the Bodmer Papyri (PB): This unique collection of Greek and Coptic papyri of the second and fifth centuries, likely a remnant of the library of a scholar or a monastery in Middle Egypt, contains no less than 1800 sheets, among which are included the oldest and most complete known copy of the Gospel of John (dating around 200CE) and three comedies from the Athenian playwright Menander (including *Dyscolos*, the archetypal *Misanthrope* by Molière), considered to be lost until the late 1950s.
- The collection of Bodmer Codices (CB): This collection includes over 350 manuscripts, mainly from Western civilization (mostly dating from the medieval period, between the ninth and fifteenth centuries), but also from eastern civilizations (Persian works, Arabic, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, etc.).
- The collection of Bodmer Incunabula (Inc. B): This section contains over 270 Incunabula (books printed during the fifteenth century), of which the majority are editions of Greco-Latin classics (also known as the first printed manifestation in Antiquity). The most valuable work of this section is undoubtedly the copy of the Gutenberg Bible (1454), issued from Imperial Russia. This is the only copy in Switzerland of the mythical book and one of only three in the world to be put on public display.
- The collection of autographs: in his desire to reach back to the nearest creative spark, Martin Bodmer endeavored to bring together the largest number of written demonstrations, through the manuscripts of most renowned Western authors from the seventeenth century on. Few important names are missing from this collection of manuscripts, drafts, articles, letters, musical sheets ... Among them is featured the dense manuscript of "On the Church" by Isaac Newton, a work still unprecedented at this time.
- The collection of prints: in the same way, the section of prints mainly consists of original editions, i.e. the first printed texts, most often in its original binding.

All these works are now easily available, both to researchers around the world (users may have access to the consulting rooms of the library), as well as the public (via the Museum). However, the use of these documents must follow strict guidelines, and will be subject to regular inspections and preventive restorations in the laboratory of the Foundation.

3.4 History/provenance

The birth of the collection dates back to 1916, when the young Martin Bodmer (1899-1971) bought a German edition of *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, illustrated by artist Edmund Dulac. Subsequently, for sixty years, he continued to seek the most important copies of household names of Weltliteratur, working with the most prestigious and traditional booksellers in the world, which often directly offered him their best

pieces. Most of the times, he would buy books individually, but occasionally deviated from this practice when purchasing entire collections, as was the case with the prodigious collection of Shakespeare's Rosenbach (Bodmer acquired, in 1952, all four editions, as well as original individual editions), a good number of French romantic works coming from Imperial Russian libraries (which he acquired from a sales held by Soviet authorities in London, in 1928), or the set of Bodmer Papyri, in the late 1950s. After the death of Martin Bodmer, the collection continued to grow, and major pieces continue to be acquired. This includes the three prestigious medieval manuscripts from Beck's collection (1997), the first corrected drafts of *"In Search of Lost Time"* by Proust (2000) and several other manuscripts by Jorge-Luis Borges (2002-2003).

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name	Adresse		
Martin Bodmer Foundation	19-21, route Martin-Bodmer, CH-1223 Cologny, Geneva, Switzerland		
Telephone	Facsimile	Email	
+41.22.707.44.33	+41.22.707.44.30	info@fondationbodmer.ch	

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name	Adresse		
Telephone	Facsimile	Email	

4.3 Legal Status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage.

The Martin Bodmer Foundation was established by statute on 26 February, 1971, as a private foundation, recognized by the public interest and listed under the "Swiss inventory of cultural property of national significance"

4.4 Accessibility

Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

Since its official inauguration on 16 October, 1951, the Bodmer Library's mission has been to receive visitors from two types of audiences, namely researchers from around the world, attracted by the unique materials available to them, as well as amateurs, through a small museum with a selection of some fifty books and manuscripts. The tradition was confirmed after the death of Martin Bodmer and the establishment of the Foundation in 1971. During the 1980s and 1990s, annual attendance was of around 150 researches and 1,500 visitors.

At the turn of the century, under the leadership of prof. Charles Mela, the then President of the Foundation Board, it was decided that the treasures of the collection would be open to a wider audience: a hypogeum museum, or a type of crypt of knowledge was then developed by the famous Swiss architect Mario Botta and opened in November 2003. 300 documents, including papyri, manuscripts, incunabula and prints are now being presented to the public on two underground levels, in a permanent exhibition renewed every three years. Furthermore, two temporary exhibitions are also available and combine documents from Bodmer Library and borrowed documents from libraries around the world (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, British Library, Bibliotheca Vaticana, Biblioteca Laurenziana de Florence, Staatsbibliothek de

München, ...). In ten years of operation, thirty exhibitions have been held, with a few going down in history, such as *Eros invaincu* (which presented for the first time in 2004 the manuscript roll of *The 120 Days of Sodom*, from Marquis de Sade), *Orient-Occident - Racines spirituelles de l'Europe* (which exhibited in 2009 the papyrus of the Gospel of Judas), or *Du corps aux étoiles: la médecine ancienne* (which called on 45 international partners).

Open to the public from Tuesday to Sunday from 14h to 18h, the Museum of the Martin Bodmer Foundation also hosts many cultural side events (the "nocturnes" with guided tours, educational workshops, concerts, lectures, documentary or film projections, etc.). Its annual attendance was of 15,000 visitors in 2013, over 300 researchers, direct users of the library resources, which took place either through direct visit or by requests for bibliographic information or photographs. Consultation requests must be justified (and recommended by the thesis or dissertation supervisor, in the case of doctoral students), and are later submitted for approval to the Board of Trustees. The most fragile documents have been scanned in high definition, in order to replace the "digital copies" of the originals.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

Since February 2013, the Martin Bodmer Foundation is equipped with a digital copying studio, considered among the most advanced in Switzerland, which allows researchers or publishers to obtain high definition photographs of the works in the collection. If a minimal fee is charged to cover the costs of the shots (costs of material and labor), no right of reproduction is perceived. However, the user is requested to include the source of the shot, and the Foundation's copyright.

Many international projects are underway involving scanned manuscripts: the main one being e-Codices, led by the University of Freiburg. The Martin Bodmer Foundation is the main partner of the project alongside the *Stiftsbibliothek* from the Saint Gallen Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Site). We may also mention the project MONLOE ("Montaigne en ligne"), which the Foundation once again participated by sending full scanning of a piece by Quintus Curtius Rufus, copiously annotated by Montaigne, free of charge.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

The Bodmer Library, the result of a demanding and vigilant passion, is considered in the world of bibliophiles, synonymous to quality and demand: Martin Bodmer has always been prudent in the selection of the books, both for their intellectual or bibliographic importance and their condition and authenticity. Martin Bodmer summarized this philosophy in the following terms: "[in my collection, I] grant the greatest importance to the original copy. Manuscripts and prints are as close to the date of the original piece as possible". These works, originated most commonly from big names in the bibliophile world, have also been carefully and scholarly studied by many scholars over the years.

5.2 World significance

The Bodmer Library, built and articulated around a precise vision (the Weltliteratur), consists of a collection absolutely unmatched in the world. Many pieces are considered highly valuable and unique by scholars, such is the case with the Bodmer Papyri (an irreplaceable heritage that eventually granted Cologny the nickname of "the Mecca of papyrologists"): the historical, scientific, and religious importance of this set is quite comparable to the other two great papyrology discoveries of the twentieth century, namely the famous "Dead Sea Scrolls" (Qumran) and the gnostic Coptic manuscripts of Nag Hammadi.

Almost every major civilization and culture is represented in the collection through texts or copies carefully selected as the most representative of its kind: the novels from medieval Japan (Genji

monogatari or Ise monogatari among the works from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); the Gutenberg Bible (the first book printed by movable type, a revolutionary milestone in literary history); several copies of the Amduat, written under the last Egyptian pharaohs alongside an Aztec codex discovered in the sixteenth century; a Prakrit manuscript of the Kalpa Sutra (India, fifteenth century), etc. The Bodmer Library thus invites us to a walk in the spiritual history of humankind, for a chance to discover unique cultures through the most beautiful copies from the witnesses of their intellectual production.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

1 Time

Built by a man born in the late nineteenth century who witnessed two world wars (his actions in favor of spiritual relief of prisoners of war between 1939 and 1945 earned him the position of Vice-President of the International Red Cross), the Bodmer Library strived for a humanist response to the cultural divisions and ideological clashes that dotted the twentieth century. The concept of Weltliteratur assumed a transnational, cross-border and trans-linguistic view of culture. On this note, Jean Starobinski stated: "The idea of Goethe's Weltliteratur defended by Martin Bodmer, was a type of antidote to our country [Switzerland] against the pathological forms of nationalism which spread across Europe. It was indeed a Western idea, but it also reveals how the West has sought to recognize and admire the cultures around it".

2 Place

The strong presence of Greek and Latin classics, through its manuscripts (mostly dating from the medieval period) or prints (often the main incunabula editions), is a real tribute to the cultural influence of Ancient Greece (Athens mostly) and as well as to Imperial Rome. These volumes have played a major role in several successful exhibitions of the Bodmer Foundation, figuring prominently in *Mots et monnaies – De la Grèce ancienne à Byzance* (2012, in association with the Benaki Museum and Kipke Foundation of Athens) or currently in *Alexandrie la Divine* (2014, in collaboration with the Biblioteca Laurenziana Florence).

3 People

"The work is the man." In this respect, the works held by the Bodmer Library summarize both the intellectual and biographical path of authors or famous historical figures. In addition to the original editions of the greatest texts in the history of our civilization (from Luther's post of the *95 thesis* to Marx' *Das Kapital*, through the first edition of Confucian sentences or Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*), the most interesting examples of this approach are annotated books or those containing famous signatures. The collections thus portrays about a hundred other examples:

- A venerable manuscript of Cicero's *De partitionibus oratoriae*, copied in an abbey in northern Italy in the ninth century and found, four centuries later, in the library of Petrarch, who annotated the copy himself,
- The copy of the original edition of *Principia Mathematica* by Isaac Newton (1687) that had once belonged to another great mathematician of the seventeenth century, Leibniz (who, for his part, had copiously annotated, making several corrections to the calculations of its competitor),
- The first two editions of Schopenhauer's famous *Die Welt Schopenhauer* (1819 and 1842), fully produced and annotated by the author.
- Charles de Gaulle's 1930 article *Du Caractère* later dedicated to the Bodmer Foundation.

4 Subject and theme

The Bodmer Library assembles a great number of texts known to have defined science, both natural and human, as it is designated to receive accounts of great bursts of human thought. These include:

- Geography: The large incunable illustrated edition of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* and the original Latin edition of Christopher Columbus' *Letter on the First Voyage*, reporting the discovery of the New World,

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- Cosmology: The original edition of Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium Coelestium* and Galileo's *Dialogo*, the origin of his conviction,
 - Politics: The collection features both original editions of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789), Marx' *Das Kapital* or Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

5 Form and style

The Bodmer Library, representing a linguistic melting pot, houses books written in 80 different languages. Remarkably, many of these works are the first printed manifestation of these languages. The collection is also the repository of various fields: the art of illumination and calligraphy, the art of engraving (wood, copper, steel ...) and typography, bookbinding, and over five thousand years of literature history.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

Among the founding themes of the Bodmer Library is Faith (Glaube): numerous religions are represented in the collection through some of its prestigious religious works. We can thus refer to:

- The Gospel of John (PB II) and the other Christian Bodmer Papyri (Martin Bodmer offered to Pope Paul VI a fragment of his "Epistles of Peter," alongside a letter explaining that the work would thus return to the house of Peter).
- Various Bodmer Papyri of the Coptic Christian gnosis.
- The Great Buddha's discourse on eternal life: This precious document, dating from the ninth century and originated from the famous Dunhuang caves, is venerated by the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to such an extent that the current Dalai Lama prayed before the relic during a visit to the Foundation in 1976.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

While the content of the manuscripts and other works of the collection is widely considered unique, the Bodmer Library also holds various "*unica*", an edition's only available copy (such as the German version of Aesop's fables [1498], the second edition (and first preserved copy) of the famous comedy *La Celestina* [1500], and three Ménandre comedies.

6.2 Integrity

The Bodmer Library houses a homogeneous collection whose unity and coherence have never been questioned. It should be noted that the collection gathered by Martin Bodmer between 1916 and 1971 still retains the structure and spirit intended by its creator (organized by broad themes and pillars proposed in 1947 in his *Bibliothek der Weltliteratur*). The Papyrus XIV-XV PB, currently kept in the Vatican Library, was conceded in 2007 according to Martin Bodner's expressed desire to have it offered to the Pope (insofar as the Library already housed an interesting copy of the Gospel of John with the Papyrus PB II).

'Nomination form translated by Ms. Layse Farias under the UNV Programme'