



10-31-2017

Manuscripts of Sir Thomas Phillipps in North American Institutions

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Abstract

The manuscript collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps was almost certainly the largest private collection ever assembled. Its dispersal during the century after his death in 1872 scattered his manuscripts into public and private collections around the world. These included many collections in North America, several of which now count former Phillipps manuscripts among their greatest treasures. This paper examines the extent to which Phillipps manuscripts are now held in institutional collections in North America and traces the history of their acquisition.

Keywords

manuscript studies, manuscript collections, Sir Thomas Phillipps, private collectors, dispersed collections, public collections, collectors, provenance, manuscript trade, collecting

MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

(Fall 2016)

Manuscript Studies (ISSN 2381-5329) is published semiannually
by the University of Pennsylvania Press



The Schoenberg Institute
for Manuscript Studies

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES

MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2
(Fall 2016)

ISSN 2381-5329

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Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press,
3905 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Printed in the U.S.A. on acid-free paper.

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Manuscripts of Sir Thomas Phillipps in North American Institutions

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THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION OF Sir Thomas Phillipps was almost certainly the largest private collection ever assembled. Its dispersal during the century after his death in 1872 scattered his manuscripts into public and private collections around the world. This paper examines the extent to which Phillipps manuscripts are held in institutional collections in North America and traces the history of their acquisition. Because of the uncertainty inherent in information about Phillipps's collection, and the inadequacies and inaccuracies of current catalog information, calculating total figures must remain imprecise and approximate at best. But the broad picture of the migration of these manuscripts to North America remains sufficiently clear.

Context

A significant number of manuscripts that are now in North American institutional collections once belonged to the English collector and self-styled “Vello-maniac” Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872). Using the income from the estate he inherited from his father, a wealthy Manchester industrialist, Phillipps accumulated a vast collection of manuscripts, books, paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, and other materials. The manuscripts alone

are estimated to have numbered well over forty thousand in total—almost certainly the largest private collection ever assembled, and larger than most public collections to this day.¹

Phillipps was buying at a good time. The private collections formed from the dispersal of religious libraries in France and Italy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were now themselves coming onto the market. These included those of collectors like Johann Meerman, Leander van Ess, and Richard Heber, as well as the more notorious Luigi Celotti and Guglielmo Libri. The heirs of major English collectors like Lord North were also selling. Phillipps was prepared to pay high prices for his acquisitions, and he claimed that this was a deliberate strategy on his part to save at-risk historical materials.² As well as medieval and Renaissance codices—often valuable and important ones—he acquired large numbers of archival documents, especially those associated with British regional and local history.

Despite lengthy negotiations with both the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, the Phillipps collection still remained in the family's possession when he died. Its subsequent dispersal, once his daughter Katherine Fenwick and her husband had won their legal case to overturn his will, took more than a century. The broad outline of this process up to the 1950s has been recounted by A. N. L. Munby.³ A series of auctions through Sotheby's in London took place between the 1890s and the 1930s, supplemented by direct sales to various European governments and to a few private collectors like Alfred Chester Beatty and his wife Edith. The remainder of the collection was then sold in 1946 to the London booksellers W. H. Robinson, Ltd., who disposed of it through further Sotheby's auctions, catalog sales, and donations to the Bodleian Library. The "residue of the residue" was eventually sold to the New York firm of H. P. Kraus in the later 1970s and

1 A. N. L. Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library from 1841 to 1872* (Phillipps Studies 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 166.

2 Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library*, 170.

3 A. N. L. Munby, *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library* (Phillipps Studies 5; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

appeared in subsequent Kraus catalogs. Phillipps manuscripts continue to be resold to the present day.

This lengthy process of dispersal scattered the Phillipps manuscripts around the world. Many of them remained in Britain or migrated to Western European countries—in some cases, back to the countries from which they had originated. But a significant number crossed the Atlantic and are now in institutional or private collections in North America. This study focuses on those Phillipps manuscripts that are now located in institutional collections in the United States and Canada.

Counting the Numbers

Both De Ricci's *Census* and Faye and Bond's *Supplement* include a concordance of Phillipps manuscript numbers against entries in these catalogs. The concordance in the *Census* contains 601 unique Phillipps numbers, as well as a further 59 alternative numbers for manuscripts with multiple numbers. There are also 22 manuscripts with a Phillipps provenance where the Phillipps number is unknown or unrecorded.⁴ In addition to these, there are several Phillipps manuscripts listed in *Census* entries that are not recorded in the concordance (e.g., Phillipps no. 31862 at the Folger Library). There are also a few cases where the *Census* records the Phillipps number incorrectly (e.g., Phillipps no. 16291 among the Plimpton manuscripts, recorded in the *Census* as 16921).

The concordance in Faye and Bond's *Supplement* contains 227 unique Phillipps numbers, as well as a further 24 items where alternative numbers refer to the same manuscript, and 2 more where the Phillipps number was unknown or unrecorded.⁵ There is at least one Phillipps manuscript that is

4 Seymour de Ricci and William J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 3 vols. (New York: Wilson, 1935–1940), 209–11.

5 W. H. Bond, C. U. Faye, and Seymour de Ricci, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1962), 619–21.

described in the *Supplement* without any reference to its Phillipps number; this is Phillipps no. 2067, then owned by Mrs. Edward L. Doheny and subsequently sold at Christie's in 1987.

There is very little overlap between the *Census* and the *Supplement*. There appear to be only three Phillipps manuscripts that appear in both catalogs. Combining the figures from the *Census* and the *Supplement*, we can estimate that, of the medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the Phillipps collection, as many as 850 may have been in North America in the early 1960s. If the duplicate numbers are added, manuscripts in North American collections may have covered about nine hundred of the Phillipps numbers. This is about 11 percent of the eight thousand medieval and Renaissance codices then in North American public collections, as estimated by Lisa Fagin Davis.⁶

These figures include manuscripts in private collections, at least at the time of the original *Census* in the mid-1930s. But they do not cover manuscripts that fall outside the defined scope of both the *Census* and its *Supplement*: "Western manuscripts before 1600." A large proportion of the Phillipps collection was in fact devoted to manuscripts and documents of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, which therefore fell outside the scope of these catalogs. The Folger Shakespeare Library, in particular, already held many post-1600 Phillipps manuscripts at the time of De Ricci's original *Census*.

The current total of Phillipps manuscripts in North America is more than double the number recorded in the *Census* and its *Supplement*. At the present day, there are an estimated 2,300 Phillipps manuscripts in public institutional collections. These include 2,180 Phillipps numbers, and about 120 manuscripts that are described as having a Phillipps provenance but not a Phillipps number. The actual number of manuscripts is slightly less than this, since these figures include some manuscripts with more than one Phillipps number. The Grolier Club's collection of approximately five thousand unnumbered fragments is not included in these calculations.

6 Lisa Fagin Davis, "Manuscript Road Trip: The Promise of Digital Fragmentology," 13 July 2015, <https://manuscriptroadtrip.wordpress.com/2015/07/>.

This substantial increase is not entirely due to the continuing purchase and acquisition of Phillipps manuscripts by North American libraries and museums since the 1960s. The increased figure given here includes post-Renaissance Phillipps materials, many of which had been acquired prior to the 1960s. It also reflects the transfer of several major private collections to public institutions and the conversion of previously private collections into public ones. Auctions of manuscripts from the Phillipps collection continued into the 1970s, so North American institutions were still able to buy Phillipps manuscripts until then. But, since the 1980s, there have been far fewer opportunities to acquire Phillipps manuscripts; the Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts records an annual average of only sixteen transactions involving Phillipps manuscripts over the last thirty years. All this helps to explain why the increase in Phillipps manuscripts since the 1960s has been considerably less than the overall growth in North American manuscript collections, as calculated by Conway and Davis.⁷

Many Phillipps manuscripts may remain in private hands in North America. But it is impossible to estimate how many or what proportion, or to know which manuscripts are owned by private collectors. This kind of information is simply no longer available, even though Conway and Davis have provided valuable information about the dispersal of some of the earlier private collections.⁸ It may well be the case that factors like the cutting-up of some manuscripts from the 1940s onwards, as well as the recent “democratization” of antiquarian bookselling through web services like AbeBooks, have made it more feasible for small collectors to purchase Phillipps material.

7 Melissa Conway and Lisa Fagin Davis, “The *Directory of Institutions in the United States and Canada with Pre-1600 Manuscript Holdings: From Its Origins to the Present, and Its Role in Tracking the Migration of Manuscripts in North American Repositories*,” *Manuscripta* 57 (2013): 173.

8 Melissa Conway and Lisa Fagin Davis, “*Directory of Collections in the United States and Canada with Pre-1600 Manuscript Holdings*,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 109 (2015): 273–420.

History

The history of the Phillipps manuscripts in North America begins with the Sotheby's auctions in the 1890s. The first seven medieval and Renaissance manuscripts acquired by the Harvard College Library came from the Phillipps auction of 10 June 1896, via an 1896 Quaritch catalog.⁹ They included Phillipps no. 14948 (now Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library, MS Lat 41), Phillipps no. 9045 (now Houghton MS Lat 42), Phillipps no. 6332 (now Houghton MS Lat 43), and Phillipps no. 6748 (now Houghton MS Lat 124). These also seem to have been the first Phillipps manuscripts to reach North America.

Over the subsequent century and a quarter, the history of the Phillipps manuscripts in North America has been similar to the history of manuscript collecting more generally, though that history has yet to be written.¹⁰ Several of the major private universities have significant Phillipps collections, acquired partly by purchase and partly through donations and bequests. Harvard University, which owns about 160 Phillipps manuscripts, began collecting in 1896 and has been steadily adding to its collection ever since.¹¹ Columbia University's collection of Phillipps manuscripts began with George A. Plimpton's bequest of fifty-three manuscripts in 1936, and has subsequently grown to about eighty-three in total.

Yale University did not start to collect Phillipps manuscripts until receiving a series of donations in the 1940s and 1950s, especially from David Wagstaff. Purchases began in the mid-1950s and increased significantly after the opening of the Beinecke Library in 1963.¹² Yale now has the largest collection of Phillipps manuscripts in North America, with almost four

9 Laura Light, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), xii–xiv.

10 Conway and Davis, "The Directory of Institutions," 172.

11 Light, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, xii–xiv.

12 Barbara Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*, 4 vols. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1984–2004), 1:15–18.

hundred in the Beinecke Library and about sixty in other libraries (including more than thirty in the Lewis Walpole Library).

Several other universities have substantial collections of Phillipps manuscripts. The University of Kansas has 127 items, mostly consisting of Porter family papers purchased between 1948 and 2005. The University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign holds more than eighty—most of them purchased before 1925, and the rest in the 1940s. The University of California, Berkeley owns sixty-five manuscripts, more than twenty of which are in the Robbins Collection, though mostly acquired after its donation by Lloyd Robbins in 1952. Princeton University holds sixty-three Phillipps manuscripts, many purchased since the 1980s. Among them are eight in the Scheide Library, housed at Princeton since 1959 and bequeathed in 2015. The University of Pennsylvania owns forty-five Phillipps manuscripts, seven of which were included in the Schoenberg donation of 2011. Indiana University has thirty-two, many of which are individual leaves in the Poole collection. Others form part of the Parker collection.

In the public library sector, there are Phillipps manuscripts in only a relatively small number of institutions. The largest collection is in the Library of Congress, which has grouped 1,100 items representing about seventy Phillipps numbers into a single “Sir Thomas Phillipps collection.”¹³ It contains documentary materials relating to the early history of North America and the West Indies, and was assembled gradually by gift and purchase between 1901 and 1983.

The Free Library of Philadelphia owns about forty-five Phillipps manuscripts. Most of these were part of the Carson and Lewis donations in 1929 and 1938 respectively. The New York Public Library has twelve Phillipps manuscripts, one of which (Phillipps no. 15689) was purchased as early as 1897. The Newberry Library has eight Phillipps manuscripts. Boston Public Library has four, and the Cleveland Public Library has three (though the Phillipps provenance of two of these is not recorded in the library’s catalog).

13 Carolyn Sung, Allison Davis, and Audrey A. Walker, *Sir Thomas Phillipps: A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2009), <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms014065>, accessed 17 June 2016.

The Georgia Archives bought twenty-one early colonial documents with Phillipps manuscript numbers in 1946.¹⁴

In many cases, the public institutional collections of Phillipps manuscripts have their origins in the libraries of important private collectors. Many of these collectors began collecting in the earlier twentieth century, and were well-represented in De Ricci's *Census*. Their collections were subsequently transferred into public collections, usually by donation or bequest. Typical of this group was George A. Plimpton, who bought four manuscripts at the Sotheby's Phillipps auction in 1899. They were Phillipps no. 10055 (now New York, Columbia University, Plimpton MS 149), Phillipps no. 9679 (Plimpton MS 147), Phillipps no. 7805 (Plimpton MS 143), and Phillipps no. 10088 (Plimpton MS 148). Over the next three decades, Plimpton acquired at least forty-nine more Phillipps manuscripts. These, together with the rest of his extensive collections, were donated to Columbia University in 1936.

John Frederick Lewis (1860–1932) played a similar role for the Free Library of Philadelphia. His manuscript collection, which was donated in 1938 by his widow, included at least fourteen with Phillipps provenance. A similar number came from Hampton L. Carson's collection of English common law manuscripts, donated after his death in 1929.

Other collectors began collecting after De Ricci's *Census* or collected manuscripts that fell outside the scope of his survey. Typical of these was Wilmarth S. Lewis, whose library devoted to Horace Walpole and the eighteenth century was assembled between the 1920s and 1970s. It included more than thirty manuscripts and was bequeathed to Yale University in 1980. Another Yale benefactor was James M. Osborn, who collected from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. His collection, which focused on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, included at least fifty Phillipps manuscripts. Thomas E. Marston's collection, sold to Yale in 1962, contained at least seventeen Phillipps manuscripts.

At Harvard University, there are twenty-one Phillipps manuscripts in the Printing & Graphic Arts Collection (MS Typ) as the result of the col-

14 Munby, *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library*, 106.

lecting activity of Philip Hofer from the 1930s onwards. Another Harvard benefactor was William K. Richardson, whose collecting took place from 1908 until about 1950. As part of a bequest after his death in 1951, Harvard acquired at least four Phillipps manuscripts.

Howard L. Goodhart (1884–1951) and his daughter Phyllis Goodhart Gordan (1913–1994) acquired at least thirty-five Phillipps manuscripts between the 1930s and the 1990s. Twenty-four of these are now at Bryn Mawr College, as the results of successive donations beginning in the 1940s. The others are untraced.

Other private collectors have assembled and donated their collections in more recent decades. The collection of Lawrence J. Schoenberg, donated to the University of Pennsylvania Libraries in 2011 (and managed by them since 2007), contains seven Phillipps manuscripts. Eight Phillipps manuscripts formerly owned by Paul Mellon (1907–1999) were bequeathed to Yale University's Center for British Art.¹⁵ Eighteen Phillipps manuscripts collected by Toshiyuki Takamiya since the late 1970s were deposited in the Beinecke Library at Yale University in 2013 on long-term loan.

Harrison Horblit (1912–1988) is a particularly interesting example of these more recent transfers from personal to institutional ownership. The Grolier Club in New York holds a significant collection of materials relating to Phillipps.¹⁶ This collection was built up by Horblit over several decades from various sources, and was donated to the Grolier Club by his widow Jean in 1995. It includes personal archival materials, annotated sales catalogs, and copies of Phillipps's own publications from the Middle Hill Press. Horblit also assembled an important collection of Phillipps photographic material, which he donated to Harvard University.¹⁷

15 I am grateful to Francis Lapka for information about the Phillipps manuscripts in the Yale Center for British Art.

16 Martin Antonetti and Eric Holzenberg, "The Horblit Phillipps Collection at the Grolier Club," *The Gazette of the Grolier Club* 48 (1997): 51–72.

17 Anne Anninger and Julie Melby, *Salts of Silver, Toned with Gold: The Harrison D. Horblit Collection of Early Photography*, ed. Victoria Alexander (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1999).

The Grolier Club has subsequently added to its Phillipps collection. Exhibited in the Phillipps Room at the Grolier Club is the only surviving set of wooden archival boxes from Thirlestaine House, together with a large number of manuscript fragments and documents crammed into it. These were acquired in 2003. They have never been listed, but contain about five thousand items.¹⁸

Not all of the important private collectors donated their manuscripts to institutional libraries. In the earlier twentieth century, there was a small but very significant group of major collectors whose personal collections were transformed into institutional collections. Most of these collections were assembled in the early twentieth century, and most of the institutional transformations took place in the 1920s and 1930s. The earliest of these was the Henry E. Huntington Library, established as a trust in 1919 and first opened to researchers in 1920.¹⁹ The Huntington now holds one hundred numbered Phillipps manuscripts, more than half of which are in the Battle Abbey archives, purchased in 1923. There are also four unnumbered Phillipps manuscripts and five that are among the incunabula originally from the library of Leander van Ess.

The Folger Library, which opened in 1932, housed the collections assembled over the previous thirty years by Henry Clay Folger.²⁰ It now contains about 260 Phillipps manuscripts—one of the largest collections in North America. Most of these are sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents, with the result that only about one-third of the Folger's Phillipps manuscripts appear in De Ricci's *Census*.

The Morgan Library now owns about eighty Phillipps manuscripts. It became a public institution in 1924 but many of its Phillipps manuscripts were acquired before that event. Nine of them were acquired directly from Thomas FitzRoy Fenwick between 1905 and 1920, at a staggering cost of

18 John Baker, *The English Legal Manuscripts Formerly in the Collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps* (London: Selden Society, 2008), 158.

19 Donald C. Dickinson, *Henry E. Huntington's Library of Libraries* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1995), 221–26.

20 Stephen H. Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare: the Story of Henry and Emily Folger* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

£28,500. Fenwick sold more than 3,600 manuscripts privately up until 1920, but these nine Morgan purchases amounted to almost 40 percent of his income from private sales.²¹ They included Phillipps's most expensive purchase—the tenth-century copy of Dioscorides's herbal (Phillipps no. 21975; New York, Morgan Library, M.652).

The Walters Art Gallery (now the Walters Art Museum) opened as a public institution in November 1934. Many of its twenty-four Phillipps manuscripts had been included in the bequest made by Henry Walters on his death in 1931; at least one of these (Phillipps no. 22130) was acquired as early as 1903. But the Walters continued to acquire Phillipps manuscripts between the 1940s and 1960s, and in one case (Phillipps no. 22241) as late as 1985.²²

This phenomenon of transitioning Phillipps manuscripts from personal to institutional collections became much less frequent after the 1940s. One important exception is the Gilcrease Museum, which arose out of the American history and art collections of Thomas Gilcrease. It now contains 127 items with Phillipps numbers, as well as some Phillipps-related correspondence. The numbered Phillipps materials were originally acquired by Thomas Gilcrease from the Robinson brothers in 1946–1947; he transferred ownership to the Museum in 1955. The correspondence was acquired by the Museum in the early 1960s.²³

The Getty Museum is another exception. Established in 1974, it did not collect medieval manuscripts until the purchase of the illuminated manuscript collection of Peter Ludwig in 1983. Among this remarkable German collection were fifteen important Phillipps manuscripts. The Getty Museum subsequently sold eight of these: three in 1988, and five in 1997 (Ludwig VII 2, XI 4, XII 1, XII 4, XIII 10, XIV 1, XV 6, and XV 16). None of these has so far reappeared in a public collection in North America, though one (Ludwig XIII 10; Phillipps no. 20760) is now in the Wellcome Library in London.²⁴

21 Munby, *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library*, 53–55, 68–71.

22 I am grateful to Dr. Lynley Herbert for information about the Phillipps manuscripts in the Walters Art Museum.

23 Joan Carpenter Troccoli, "George Catlin and Sir Thomas Phillipps: A Nineteenth-Century Friendship," *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 10 (1995): 19.

24 Conway and Davis, "Directory of Collections," 281–83.

It is worth noting that the Phillipps manuscripts have not been immune from the “biblioclast” activities of Otto Ege and his ilk, which have spread individual manuscript leaves and fragments across public and private collections alike. At least four of the Phillipps manuscripts have the dubious distinction of having been acquired by Otto Ege in the 1940s and distributed as part of his various sets of manuscript leaves. These manuscripts are now scattered across numerous North American institutions. As documented by Scott Gwara,²⁵ they are as follows:

1. Phillipps no. 516: part of Ege’s set “Fifty Original Leaves”; twenty-five sets identified in US libraries, four in Canada; leaves in eight other institutions
2. Phillipps no. 3354: part of Ege’s sets “Original Leaves from Famous Books, Eight Centuries” and “Original Leaves from Famous Books, Nine Centuries”; thirty-five sets identified in US libraries; one other leaf
3. Phillipps no. 20610: part of Ege’s set “Fifteen Original Oriental Leaves of Six Centuries”; thirteen sets identified in US libraries
4. Phillipps no. 23124: part of Ege’s set “Fifteen Original Oriental Leaves of Six Centuries”; thirteen sets identified in US libraries

Two other Phillipps manuscripts have been identified by Gwara as among those dismembered by Otto Ege: no. 4548 (leaves in three institutions) and no. 958 (a leaf in at least one institution). At least one more Phillipps manuscript (no. 7379: “Natura Brevium”) is thought to have been cut up by an American bookseller and sold as individual leaves at some point after 1962.²⁶

25 Scott Gwara, *Otto Ege’s Manuscripts: A Study of Ege’s Manuscript Collections, Portfolios, and Retail Trade, with a Comprehensive Handlist of Manuscripts Collected or Sold* (Cayles, SC: de Brailes, 2013), 25, 35–37, 47–48, 100–3, 106–7, 143.

26 Baker, *The English Legal Manuscripts*, 32–33.

Photography and Art

Phillipps's printed catalog was not limited to codices and archival documents. The numbered items listed in the catalog also included a range of other kinds of items, especially photographs and works of art. Some of these materials are now in institutional collections in North America.

Phillipps had a keen interest in photography in its earliest years, as his surviving correspondence with W. H. Fox Talbot reveals.²⁷ Among other things, Phillipps was interested in the possible application of photography to recording and disseminating manuscripts. He also commissioned a series of photographers to work for him. Phillipps's photography collection was acquired from the Robinson brothers in 1961 by Harrison Horblit. It included daguerrotypes, calotypes, and early prints, as well as books of gem tintypes and *cartes de visite*.²⁸ The collection was donated to Harvard University in 1995 by Horblit's widow Jean. Twelve of Phillipps's photograph albums were numbered among his manuscripts. They include the following items:

- Charles Phillipps—Middle Hill views (nos. 15454, 15455, 15456, 22293, and 23287)
- Mrs. Amelia Guppy's photographs of Middle Hill (nos. 19044 and 21009)
- Mrs. Guppy's photographs of "charters, seals and antiquities" at Middle Hill (no. 20976)

The latter, which probably dates from 1853, has been described as probably "the earliest collection of bibliographical photographs."²⁹

27 Larry J. Schaaf, "'Splendid Calotypes': Henry Talbot, Amelia Guppy, Sir Thomas Phillipps, and Photographs on Paper," in *Six Exposures: Essays in Celebration of the Opening of the Harrison D. Horblit Collection of Early Photography* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1999), 1–46.

28 Anninger and Melby, *Salts of Silver, Toned with Gold*, xii.

29 Eugenia Parry Janis, "Sir Thomas Phillipps: Photographic Memoirs of a 'Vellomaniac,'" in *Photography: Discovery and Invention: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Celebrating the Invention*

Phillipps was also an active art collector and patron. For many years he supported the American artist George Catlin, who specialized in scenes of the Indian West. The complicated nature of their dealings has been extensively documented by Munby, Troccoli, and Eisler.³⁰ Phillipps listed two sets of Catlin's works among his manuscripts: seventy drawings (nos. 13010–13079) and fifty-seven paintings (nos. 14350–14406). These were sold by the Robinson brothers to Thomas Gilcrease in 1946 and 1947 and now form part of the collection of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art in the University of Tulsa. Catlin's letters to Phillipps are also in the Gilcrease Museum, while Phillipps's letters to Catlin are in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. In 1856, Catlin also gave Phillipps a drawing of Alexander von Humboldt, which may be the one now owned by Stanford University (MSS Prints 239). It was not, however, numbered among the Phillipps manuscripts.

Phillipps also owned a large collection of Old Master drawings. Many of them were acquired at the 1860 sale of the collection of the Woodburn brothers, and had been previously owned by Sir Thomas Lawrence.³¹ Some of these are now in North America. The Rosenbach Museum and Library has an album of 170 drawings by Girolamo da Carpi (formerly Phillipps no. 15134 and formerly attributed to Giulio Romano). The Museum's catalog entry quotes this number but does not identify Phillipps as the former owner.

The Getty Art Museum holds a set of twenty drawings by Federico Zuccaro that were once owned by Phillipps. They were originally part of Phillipps no. 15135 and were acquired from the Rosenbach Foundation in 1977. Rosenbach had bought them privately from Phillipps's grandson,

of Photography Organized by the Department of Photographs and Held at the J. Paul Getty Museum, January 30, 1989, ed. Andrea P. A. Belloli (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990), 93.

³⁰ Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library*, 49–64; Troccoli, "George Catlin and Sir Thomas Phillipps"; Benita Eisler, *The Red Man's Bones: George Catlin, Artist and Showman* (New York: Norton, 2013).

³¹ A. E. Popham, *Catalogue of Drawings in the Collection Formed by Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., F.R.S., Now in the Possession of His Grandson T. FitzRoy Phillipps Fenwick of Thirlestaine House Cheltenham* (Cheltenham: privately printed, 1935), v–vi; Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library*, 221–23.

Thomas FitzRoy Fenwick, in 1930.³² The Morgan Library owns five drawings by Taddeo Zuccaro that were also formerly part of the Phillipps collection, while the Metropolitan Museum of Art has a single Zuccaro drawing from the same source. The Metropolitan Museum of Art also has an album of drawings of Lord Cobham's garden at Stowe, by the eighteenth-century French artist Jacques Rigaud. These were listed as no. 13750 in the Phillipps manuscript catalog (not no. 137500 as the Museum's website claims).

Gathering the Data

Identifying the Phillipps manuscripts now held in institutional collections in North America is a difficult task. This is not for lack of information, for the most part, although some manuscripts and some collections have disappeared without trace. In fact, there is a proliferation of sources and catalogs, but the problem is the lack of coordination between them. This reflects the bigger picture for information about historical manuscripts in North America—partial, outdated union lists and a myriad of institutional catalogs that are often inconsistent in their practices.

De Ricci's *Census* and Faye and Bond's *Supplement* still remain important starting-points.³³ Both include concordances between their entries and the Phillipps manuscript numbers. They give a good picture of the Phillipps manuscripts in North America in the mid-1930s and the early 1960s respectively. Their major drawbacks are, firstly, that their scope is limited to medieval and Renaissance manuscripts (although De Ricci is rather inconsistent in applying this limit) and, secondly, that a significant number of the manuscripts moved—or disappeared from view—in subsequent decades. Many of these subsequent histories can be gleaned from the "Directory of Collections in the United States and Canada with Pre-1600 Manuscript Holdings" compiled by Melissa Conway and Lisa Fagin Davis, which includes a good deal

32 Munby, *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library*, 80.

33 De Ricci and Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*; Faye and Bond, *Supplement to the Census*.

of valuable information about the subsequent fate of the private collections identified in the earlier catalogs.³⁴

One useful, current source is Digital Scriptorium, which brings together digitized or partly-digitized manuscripts from a range of contributing institutions. But not all North American libraries with digitized manuscripts contribute to Digital Scriptorium, and few of those that do contribute have digitized the majority of their manuscript holdings. A further limitation is that Digital Scriptorium's scope is also restricted to medieval and Renaissance manuscripts. As a result, less than 20 percent of the Phillipps manuscripts now in North American institutional collections are recorded in Digital Scriptorium (455 out of about 2,300 items).

Another major current source of consolidated data is the Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts. Its focus is on entries from sale and auction catalogs, for which it has extensive coverage. These have been supplemented to some extent by library catalogs and lists of holdings, but information about current locations—and about donations and other forms of transfer—is much sparser. It includes cross-references to the *Census* and its *Supplement*, but it shares the same limitations in chronological scope as those predecessors. While it incorporates information from the Phillipps printed catalog, this is only for those entries relating to medieval and Renaissance manuscripts.

A useful specialized supplementary source is the printed catalog of English legal manuscripts once owned by Phillipps, compiled by Sir John Baker.³⁵ This lists 276 Phillipps legal manuscripts now held in North America—many of them post-1600 and undocumented in the main consolidated sources. Baker's list is arranged according to Phillipps numbers, and is accompanied by a useful "Index of Present Owners" that gives the current shelfmarks. At least three Phillipps manuscripts included in the main list have, however, been omitted from the index.

Beyond these aggregated sources, one must rely on the many catalogs of individual institutions. Those libraries and museums with large manuscript holdings—and sufficient funds—have usually produced a printed catalog of

34 Conway and Davis, "Directory of Collections in the United States and Canada," 273–420.

35 Baker, *The English Legal Manuscripts*.

their holdings.³⁶ These catalogs are normally very detailed, accurate, and thorough. For the most part, though, they are limited in scope to medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, usually with 1600 as the cut-off date. Their coverage is also increasingly out-of-date.

Institutional cataloging practices vary greatly. Some institutions have transferred all the information from their printed manuscript catalogs into their online catalogs; others maintain separate manuscript databases or search aids. Some—especially art museums—do not make their collections database available over the web at all, and only offer selected digital highlights of their collection online. Some simply refer the researcher to their printed catalogs.

Where manuscripts are described in catalogs and databases, the treatment of provenance can be very inconsistent. Some institutions provide detailed and thorough provenance information, though it is often hidden in a “notes” field. These notes may not be searchable, even with a keyword search. The location of provenance information may vary between records in the same catalog. Only a few institutions go as far as providing an additional access point for Sir Thomas Phillipps as a former owner, thereby enabling all former Phillipps manuscripts to be identified through an “author” search. At the other extreme, some catalogs have no provenance information at all.

Other problems include a failure to record Phillipps numbers, even when mentioning Phillipps as a former owner. The digital images of New York Public Library, MA 140 clearly show two Phillipps numbers on the first page of the manuscript, but the numbers are not quoted in the accompany-

36 See C. W. Dutschke and R. H. Rouse with the assistance of Mirella Ferrari, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Claremont Libraries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); C. W. Dutschke with the assistance of R. H. Rouse, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, 2 vols. (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1989); Light, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*; Lilian M. C. Randall, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*, 5 vols. (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1988–1997); P. Saenger, *A Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Western Manuscript Books at the Newberry Library* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1989); Svato Schutzner, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscript Books in the Library of Congress: A Descriptive Catalog*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1989–1999); Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*.

ing catalog record, though the Phillipps provenance is noted. Nor do they appear in the Digital Scriptorium record for the same manuscript. The opposite problem can be found in the catalog record from the Rosenbach Museum and Library, referred to above, which quotes the number as an ownership mark, without mentioning that it is a Phillipps number or that Phillipps was the former owner.

Finding Phillipps manuscripts through a library catalog search, then, can be a rather hit-or-miss process. Saving and exporting catalog records once they have been found can also be difficult, even with the most thorough and comprehensive online catalogs. For most library databases, relevant records can only be exported individually or in small batches, and often in a limited range of bibliographic formats that may not include the crucial provenance notes. While this may partly reflect the limitations and inconsistencies endemic in manuscript cataloging practices, it mainly results from the limitations of the specific brand of software involved and the choices made in configuring that software for use. Some libraries only allow registered users to save and export catalog records. The Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts, in contrast, provides all its data as downloadable Excel or CSV files. These can then be analyzed, filtered, and imported into other environments.

The software of choice for bibliographic discovery services in many larger academic and research libraries is, increasingly, the Ex Libris product Primo. The implementation of Primo by Harvard University in its HOLLIS+ service provides a fairly typical picture of its limitations and constraints. Only thirty catalog records can be exported at one time, though HOLLIS+ contains at least 164 high-quality records for Phillipps manuscripts. Various export options are offered, but none are entirely satisfactory. Emailing the records does not include the Phillipps number or Harvard shelfmark for the manuscript. Saving the records in the EasyBib format has the same limitations. Saving the records in RefWorks requires a user account. Saving the records in the RIS format (suitable for EndNote and Zotero) does not include the Harvard shelfmark and only includes the Phillipps number if it is given as an “Alternate Title”—not if it is contained in a “Note” field. Harvard’s cataloging practice varies between these two approaches.

Constructing a master list of the Phillipps manuscripts themselves, against which to check institutional holdings, is no easy task either. Phillipps's own printed catalog has been the subject of extensive study and reconstruction, especially by Munby.³⁷ Published in stages between 1837 and 1871, it covers manuscript numbers up to 23,837. Subsequent numbers are covered to some extent by the probate inventory drawn up in 1872 by Edward A. Bond of the British Museum, after Phillipps's death. There are two different versions of this inventory in the Horblit collection in the Grolier Club (Phillipps Collection Cat. 13 and Cat. 14). They are handwritten and have never been published.

The first version, described by Munby, extends the list of Phillipps manuscripts from no. 23838 to no. 26179. Another copy of this version is in the Bodleian Library (MS Phillipps-Robinson e.466). Munby added the manuscript titles from this version to his annotated working copy of the printed catalog, copies of which are in several major libraries. The second version of the probate inventory in the Grolier Club is somewhat longer, finishing with no. 26365. It seems to have been used as a working tool by Phillipps's grandson, Thomas FitzRoy Fenwick, during the decades he spent on the gradual dispersal of the manuscripts. It includes numerous corrections and renumberings.

Both the printed and handwritten catalogs suffer from inherent problems. Some manuscripts have duplicate numbers, and some numbers refer to more than one manuscript. Phillipps was inconsistent in assigning numbers; in some cases, one number may cover several volumes or a whole collection of documents, while in other cases a number may simply refer to a single document or a single object. My approach here, as a general rule, has been to count institutional holdings against the Phillipps numbers, despite these inconsistencies, rather than attempting to count actual volumes or documents.

37 A. N. L. Munby, *The Catalogues of Manuscripts and Printed Books of Sir Thomas Phillipps* (Phillipps Studies no. 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

Conclusion

A substantial number of Phillipps manuscripts have moved from Great Britain to North America as part of the long process of dispersal of the Phillipps collection. Many were acquired before De Ricci's *Census* of 1935, while others were acquired before Faye and Bond's *Supplement* in 1962. At that time, they represented about 11 percent of all medieval and Renaissance codices in North American public collections. Today, those collections contain more than 2,300 Phillipps manuscripts.

The Phillipps manuscripts now in North America were not acquired simply because of their Phillipps provenance. Instead, they bear witness to the breadth of the Phillipps collection and to its quality. Some were collected for their beauty and their rarity, such as the Morgan Library's illuminated manuscripts. Some were collected for their specialist content, such as the English common law manuscripts in the Harvard Law Library and in the Robbins Library at the University of California Berkeley. Some were collected for their documentary value for North American history and for European history, such as the Phillipps documents in the Library of Congress and the early modern materials in the Folger Library. Some were collected for their artistic value, exemplified by the artworks and photographs at Harvard University, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Gilcrease Museum.

In many ways they mirror the broader history of manuscript collecting in North America. This is certainly true of the period between the 1890s and the 1970s, the era when all the great Phillipps auction sales took place, when only a few private collectors (such as the Morgans) were allowed direct access to the Phillipps collection, and when the only American dealer permitted to buy directly was Dr. Rosenbach. Many of the manuscripts were acquired by the major private universities, either by purchase or as the result of donations and bequests by individual private collectors. But Phillipps manuscripts are also spread across many university and college libraries (public and private, large and small), as well as in a number of public sector collecting institutions. The libraries and museums that emerged from the collections of various well-known individuals have, in most cases, significant holdings of Phillipps manuscripts.

The dispersal of the Phillipps collection coincided with the great rise in manuscript collecting in North America in the twentieth century, both institutional and private. It would be no exaggeration to say that the dispersal helped to create and accelerate that movement.

Appendix: Major Institutional Holdings of Phillipps Manuscripts

Institution	Holdings	Main sources
Columbia University	83	Plimpton bequest 1936 (purchased 1899–1930s)
Folger Library	265	Folger bequest 1932 (purchased ca. 1900–1930)
Free Library of Philadelphia	43	Lewis
Gilcrease Museum	128	Gilcrease donation 1955
Grolier Club	51	(+ 5,000 fragments) Horblit
Harvard University	160	Horblit, Hofer, Richardson
Huntington Library	132	Huntington
Indiana University	34	Poole
Library of Congress	94	
Morgan Library	83	Morgan purchases 1905–1920
Princeton University	63	Scheide
University of California Berkeley	65	Robbins
University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign	82	
University of Kansas	127	Porter family papers (purchased 1948–2005)
University of Pennsylvania	45	Schoenberg bequest 2011
Yale University	462	Osborn, Marston, Mellon, Takamiya, Lewis