Guide to the Notre Dame de Bon Encontre Woodblock Collection

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Guide to the Notre Dame de Bon
Encontre woodblock collection
ML.059
Finding aid prepared by Colleen Hoelscher

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September 22, 2016
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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## Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>The Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Notre Dame de Bon Encontre woodblock collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date [inclusive]</td>
<td>1724-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>2.0 Linear feet (1 box)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>An original eighteenth century woodblock that was used to create devotional prints of Notre Dame de Bon Encontre. The woodblock is accompanied by a modern print created using the original block.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Preferred Citation

**Historical Note**

This block would have been cut by an anonymous workman, after a design by a master *imagier*. Pear wood was often used in France, but the size of this block points to a larger tree, perhaps beechwood. The print would have been colored by hand or by stencil, probably by children, and sold to and used as objects of private devotion by pilgrims who visited the shrine of Notre-Dame-de-Bon Encontre, about six kilometers from Agen, a town in the Lot-et-Garonne, about 140 km southeast of Bordeaux. Although some sources date the origins of the cult to the early 14th century, the usually cited legend holds that in 1512 a young cowherd discovered a statue of the Virgin in some bushes next to the Garonne river. Repeated attempts to transfer the statue to the parish church failed, as it persisted in returning "home." A sanctuary was finally built on the riverside site. A manuscript register of miracles in the Departmental archives of the Lot-et-Garonne records 177 miracles said to have occurred there from 1583-1695. The largest wave of pilgrimages occurred in the 17th century, a period which witnessed a resurgence of Marian devotion in France. [excerpted from the Musinsky Rare Books catalog listing]

**Scope and Contents**

This collection consists of an original woodblock for a devotional print of Notre Dame de Bon Encontre (1724), and an undated, modern print made from the woodblock, likely in the twenty-first century.

Single large woodblock (385 x 288 x 24 mm.), probably of beechwood, carved with a pilgrimage image of Notre Dame de Bon-Encontre, with title and date at top, four-line prayer at bottom (including heading), and imprint, in capitals, "Se vendent chez: [blank, apparently excised] Marchand Cartier a Agen, rue de --", the reverse side with two wide shallow grooves at top and bottom; loss to bottom corner affecting a letter of the prayer and street name at end of imprint, one or two small border losses, worming.

A very rare survival: a woodblock for a devotional print. Black with soaked-in printer's ink, this intricately carved block is a reminder that the earliest European woodcuts were holy images. It shows a winged altarpiece. In the large central altar stands the holy statue of Notre Dame de Bon Encontre, holding the infant Christ, flanked by two angels and a pair of putti at top, between two double twisted columns wrapped with flowering branches. Each of the smaller altar wings has a scene from the life of the Virgin (Annunciation, and Mary with St. Anne) in the upper section, and scenes from the legend in the lower section. Surmounting the central altar is an arched compartment containing a small scene of Christ (apparently) with worshippers, with God the Father in a lunette at top. Two angels recline on slanting cornices. From the arched summit of the image hang hearts alternating with looped cords, and from the two recessed spaces above the arch hang the Emblems of the Passion, and three small placards, one with a cardinal's coat of arms, one with a symbol of a hand holding a candle, and the third with a pierced heart (printer's?) device and the date, 1724. [excerpted from the Musinsky Rare Books catalog listing]
Administrative Information

Publication Information
The Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute, September 2016

Access to Materials
This collection is open and available to the public for research in the Marian Library reading room. The materials are non-circulating.

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Acquisition
Purchased from Musinsky Rare Books, 2016.

Related Materials

Related Materials
Numerous similar prints can be found in the Marian Library Prints & Engravings collection. Please consult a librarian or archivist for access to this collection.

Search Terms

Genre(s)
• Devotional images
• Wood blocks (printing blocks)

Personal Name(s)

• Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint -- Pictorial works

Subject(s)

• Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Art

Bibliography for finding aid

Some descriptions in this finding aid were excerpted from the Musinsky Rare Books catalog listing.
# Collection Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Item 1: Modern print made from woodblock, ca. 2015</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Item 2: Woodblock, 1724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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