

## Swiss Re sponsors Bodmer world literature collection exhibit

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**For the first -- and only -- time a representative selection of highlights of Martin Bodmer's famous collection of world literature will be shown outside its ancestral home at Cologny, Switzerland. After appearing in Switzerland and Germany, the exhibition comes to the Grolier Club of New York, the show's only American venue, from February 21 through April 28.**

Aptly titled "A Mirror of the World," this exhibition of the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana has been organized in conjunction with the Department of the President of the City of Zürich and the German Literature Archive in Marbach, and curated by Professor Martin Bircher of the Martin Bodmer Foundation.

Financial support of the exhibit is being provided by Swiss Re, one of the world's leading reinsurance companies, which is based in Zürich, but has more than 70 offices around the globe, including significant operations in New York.

"The Bodmer collection is a treasure, unique in its scope, ageless in its appeal, and borderless in its contents," said Andreas Beerli, head of Swiss Re's Americas division and a member of the company's Executive Board. "As a global firm committed to sharing of information and knowledge, Swiss Re is pleased to sponsor the Bodmer collection tour."

Extraordinary books and manuscripts will be on view including manuscript treasures, such as early handwritten texts of Homer, medieval illuminated books of the Bible, a 15th century version of the Nibelungenlied, a copy of the Japanese Tale of Genji illustrated with more than 250 miniatures, a manuscript of Grimm's Fairy Tales, an important set of corrected proofs for Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann*, and a selection of music manuscripts from the hands of Beethoven, Mozart and Scarlatti. Important early and modern printed books will also be on show, including a copy of Newton's *Principia Mathematica* annotated by Newton's rival, Leibniz, and first printed editions of classics such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, and Goethe's *Faust*.

At his death in 1971 Martin Bodmer left behind a collection of more than 160,000 books, manuscripts, autographs and art works illustrating 3,000 years of world culture. Fascinated by the origins of culture, and drawing from the finest textual evidence of diverse nations and languages, Bodmer set himself the demanding task of showing history "as it is reflected in the intellectual creations of all times and places." The principal pillars of his library were the Bible, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (represented by one of the oldest manuscripts in the collection). On view will be texts of the literature of classical antiquity, and the Old and New Testaments. Uniquely beautiful medieval French, German and Latin codices will be shown, along with highlights from the Bodmer's collection of Dante, and superb Shakespeare first and early editions.

Among the highlights of "A Mirror of the World" are those documenting history and its great figures, including a dedication inscription of the Alexandria Library, manuscripts of the Magna Carta and the *Sachsenspiegel*, and an original of Luther's Theses. Science is represented by Madame Curie's manuscript on radioactivity, Einstein's inaugural lecture on the theory of relativity, and a holograph chapter of Darwin's *Descent of Man*; while the field of music boasts an array of works by some of the world's greatest composers. From the Orient we find Arabic, Persian, Indian, Chinese and Japanese manuscripts.

The Bodmeriana is perhaps richest in 19th and 20th century prose works, including the manuscripts of the *Fairy Tales* of the Brothers Grimm, *Witiko* by Adalbert Stifter, and *Lotte in Weimar* by Thomas Mann, as well as such important autographs as Flaubert, Balzac, Dickens, Conan Doyle, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

Copies of the best-selling illustrated German catalogue of the show will be on sale at the Club, along with a specially-printed English language supplement.

A "Mirror of the World" will be on view at the Grolier Club ([www.grolierclub.org](http://www.grolierclub.org)), 47 East 60th Street, New York. The exhibition is open to the public without charge, Monday - Saturday, 10 - 5, 21 February - 28 April, 2001.

Swiss Re is one of the world's leading reinsurers with over 70 offices in more than 30 countries. In the 1999 financial year, gross premium volume amounted to CHF 22.4 billion and the result after tax reached CHF 2.8 billion. Swiss Re is rated "Aaa" by Moody's, "AAA" by Standard & Poor's and "A++" (superior) by A.M. Best.

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