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Folger Shakespeare Library Announces Aaron T. Pratt as Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Rare Books and Prints

(Washington, DC)— The Folger Shakespeare Library has announced that Aaron T. Pratt will join the Collections and Exhibitions Department as the new Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Rare Books and Prints. In this role, Pratt will lead the development, stewardship, interpretation, and promotion of the Folger’s world-renowned collection of early modern books and prints, while helping to illuminate the continuing resonance of Shakespeare, early modern materials, and the humanities in contemporary life.

“We are thrilled Aaron will be joining us at the Folger,” said Greg Prickman, the Eric Weinmann Librarian and Director of Collections and Exhibitions. “The combination of his keen bibliographic knowledge and his enthusiastic joy about rare books and early printing will lead to many exciting discoveries and opportunities for scholars and the public to engage with the Folger collection in new ways.”

Since 2017, Pratt has been the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. He also teaches and advises graduate and undergraduate students, as well as leads courses at Rare Book School. He has published extensively on early modern book history, including Shakespeare’s First Folios and early modern playbooks, the discovery of John Milton’s annotated personal copy of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, and early English editions of the Bible, and he has presented at conferences around the world on these topics.

His research and teaching focus on bibliography, history of the book, and literature and culture of the early modern England, with a particular interest in drama. He has curated multiple exhibitions, including *The Long Lives of Very Old Books* at the Ransom Center in 2023, which displayed over 160 objects and explored how analyzing early printed books as unique artifacts and viewing the alterations and changes made throughout their histories can offer meaningful research opportunities.

Pratt will start in his role in August 2026.



Aaron T. Pratt, Incoming Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Rare Books and Prints

Aaron T. Pratt has served as Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at the Harry Ransom Center since 2017. Before that, he was Assistant Professor at Trinity University in San Antonio, having earned a Ph.D. in English Literature from Yale University. He holds a B.A. and M.A. from the Ohio State University. Among other professional affiliations, he is a founding member of the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography at Rare Book School and is Vice President of the Bibliographical Society of America.

Pratt's research focuses on bibliography, the history of the book, and the literature and culture of early modern England. His writing has appeared in several venues, including *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *The Library*, *Fine Books and Collections* magazine, and edited collections published by Oxford and Cambridge. Recently, a coauthored article in the *Times Literary Supplement* announced the discovery of John Milton's extensively annotated copy of Holinshed's Chronicles. In addition to his publishing, Pratt has lectured and taught widely on topics related to his research and curatorial work. For the past two years, he has offered Descriptive Bibliography at California Rare Book School; he will do so again in 2026. And, for the first time, he will teach Evidence in Handpress-era Books, 1450–1830. Organized by Virginia's Rare Book School, it will meet at the Ransom Center. Finally, he has curated a number of exhibitions. His largest, *The Long Lives of Very Old Books*, was on view at the Ransom Center in 2023, and he is cocurator of an exhibition that is open until August 2 of this year: *Lives and Literacy in Ancient Egypt*.

ABOUT FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

The Folger Shakespeare Library showcases the utility of Shakespeare and the humanities in cultivating healthy civic life. Anchored by the world's largest Shakespeare collection, the Folger is also home to a world-renowned collection of books, manuscripts, and prints from the 1500s to the early 1700s. Visitors to the Folger can choose how they want to experience the arts and humanities, from interactive exhibitions to captivating performances, and from pathbreaking research to transformative educational programming. The Folger fosters curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking and welcomes visitors from Washington, DC and from across the globe. Learn more at www.folger.edu.

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