

Movable Books at the Newberry

Introduction

The Newberry holds several hundred books with movable and interactive components ranging from the fifteenth to the twenty-first centuries. These diagrams with dials, flaps, and components to be cut out and constructed taught, lectured, and even entertained their readers. They were produced for a variety of audiences, in Latin and many vernaculars, for the old, and eventually, the young.

The Edward E. Ayer Collection is particularly rich in navigational and cosmographical texts that include movable teaching mechanisms, usually dials. The German mathematician Peter Apian's 1524 *Cosmographicus Liber*, which includes five such woodcut volvelles, was a hugely popular textbook. Due to the work's mention of the Americas, Ayer includes it in four languages and twenty different copies spanning eighty-five years. In contrast, another Ayer item, Sir Robert Dudley's 1646 *Dell'Arcano del mare*, contains dozens of engraved, folio-sized volvelles. Other texts tempt gamers into using a lottery dial instead of dice to tell fortunes. Before-and-after views adapt flaps for devotion, anatomical inquiry, and fantasy architecture. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century children's books with lift-the-flap and pop-up components make up another substantial group equal in number to the Renaissance and Baroque examples.

While the Newberry's movable book collections are mainly printed, there are also two manuscripts with hand-drawn dials, such as an early fifteenth-century devotional work in Latin with a rotating wheel on a string that was used as a line-specific bookmark ([VAULT folio Case MS 37.5](#)), and a seventeenth-century Hebrew Pardes Rimomim manuscript ([Hebrew MS 3](#)) including three pages of colorful volvelles geared to help interpret the Kabbalah.

You can use this research guide for information on [Searching the Catalog](#), [Highlights from the Newberry Library Collections](#), [Digitized Movable Books at the Newberry](#), [Bibliography](#), and [Collections at Other Institutions](#).

Searching the Catalog

The main types of interactive components were ones that turned, or ones that extended or lifted. While there is no single search term that will identify all of these books, here are some keywords and subject searches that can help. Ordering the results by date will also provide a helpful chronology:

Keywords: Volvelles, or Dials; Flaps

Keyword phrase: "Movable Books"

Beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, interactive books were published increasingly for children. The search terms reflect this shift. The Library of Congress discusses this terminology here:

Subject: “Toy and movable books” or “Toy and movable books – Specimens”

Highlights from the Newberry Library Collections

Volvelles and Dials

Publicius, Jacobus. [*Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi*](#). Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1482. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Inc. 4388. Moveable memory aide with a rarely intact snake-shaped volvelle.

Spirito, Lorenzo and Pampst, Paulus. [*Loosbuch \[Lottery book\]*](#). Strassburg: Balthasar Beck, 1546. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case folio BF1850 .P36 1546. Lottery game in the style of Lorenzo Spirito’s Book of Fortune with double-sided volvelle replaced with seventeenth-century alchemical engravings.

Dudley, Sir Robert. [*Dell’arcano del mare*](#). Florence: Francesco Onofri, 1646. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: VAULT Ayer 135 .D8 1646. Many engraved volvelles and printed scientific instruments in a multi-volume set also including important navigational charts.

Wither, George. [*A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne; Quickened with Metricall Illustrations, Both Morall and Divine*](#). London: A.M. for Henry Taunton, 1635. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case folio W 1025 .98. Lavishly illustrated emblem book with a fortune-telling volvelle.

Flaps

Moroni, Fra Lino. [*Descrizione del sacro monte della Vernia*](#). Florence: n.p., 1612. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Wing oversize ZP 6351 .12. Flaps reveal the hidden spaces of the sacred mountain of Verna, where Saint Francis received his Stigmata.

Daudet, Jean-Louis. [*\[Altar Cards.\] Lyon, to mid eighteenth century*](#). Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case oversize BX2230 .A48 1700z. Triptych prints for priests and private devotion following a fifteenth-century aide-memoire format.

[*Harlequinades, including Harlequin’s Invasion*](#). London: R. Sayer, 1770-1798. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Wing ZP 745 .S274. Theatrical and hand-colored folding transformation prints.

Repton, Humphrey. [*Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*](#). London: T. Bensley for J. Taylor, 1805. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case folio W 12 .736.

Witkowski, G.-J. [*Anatomie iconoclastique: atlas complémentaire de tous les ouvrages traitant de l’anatomie et de la physiologie humaines*](#). Paris: H. Lauwereyns, 1876. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case folio QM511 .W58 1876. Oversized anatomical flap diagram of the human eye.

Globes and Cut-Out Instruments

Regiomontanus. [*Calendarium*](#). Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1483. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Inc. 4390.5. Metal sundial arm is present, but no volvelle survives in any Newberry examples.

Apian, Peter. [*Cosmographicus liber*](#). Landshut: Johann Weysenburger, 1524. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: VAULT Ayer 7 .A7 1524. First edition, with idiosyncratic construction of instruments.

Apian, Peter. [*Cosmographia. French*](#). Antwerp: I. Bellere, 1581. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: VAULT Ayer 7 .A7 1581. French edition with rarely surviving contemporaneous lead weights.

Porta, Giambattista della. [*De furtivis literarum notis vulgo*](#). Neapoli: Apud Ioa. Mariam Scotum, 1563. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Case Z 216 .7. One of della Porta's three publications with do-it yourself cryptography dials. The others examples at the Newberry are: [Wing folio ZP 635 .S941](#) and [Case Z 216 .702](#).

Coronelli, Vincenzo. [*Isolario: descrizione geografico-historica, sacro-profana, antico-moderna, politica, naturale, e poetica*](#). Venetia: A' spese dell'autore, 1696 [i.e. 1697]. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: VAULT Ayer 135 .C8 1696 vol. 1. Important set of large-scale terrestrial globe gores for construction on a sphere.

Pancratz, Teresa. [*The View from a House in Kansas: Acts One to Five*](#). Chicago: Theodora Press, 2017. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Wing ZPP 2083 .T4785. Artist book with cut-out set of paper dolls.

Digitized Movable Books at the Newberry

Apian, Peter. [*Cosmographicus liber Petri Apiani mathematici*](#). Antwerp: Rolandi Bollaert, 1529. Call number: VAULT Ayer 7 .A7 1529.

Apian, Peter. [*Cosmographicus liber Petri Apiani mathematici*](#). Cologne: Arnoldum Birckman, 1533. Call number: VAULT Ayer 7 .A7 1533a.

Cordovero, Moses ben Jacob. [*Pardes rimonim*](#). N.p.: n.p., seventeenth century. Call number: Hebrew MS 3.

Bibliography

Haining, Peter. [*Movable Books: An Illustrated History*](#). London: New English Library, 1979. Location: General Collection 2nd floor. Call number: Wing folio Z1033.M73 H35.

Karr Schmidt, Suzanne Kathleen. [*Interactive and Sculptural Printmaking in the Renaissance*](#). Leiden: Brill, 2017. Location: General Collection 2nd floor. Call number: Wing NE441.5.R44 S365 2017.

Montanaro, Ann R. [*Pop-Up and Movable Books: A Bibliography*](#). Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1993. Location: Special Collections 4th floor. Call number: Wing Z1033.T68 M65 1993.

Walker, Gay. [*Eccentric Books: Arts of the Book, Yale University Library January-March 1988*](#). New Haven, CT: Yale University Library, c. 1988. Location: General Collection 2nd floor. Call number: Wing Z1033.T68 W34 1988.

Collections at Other Institutions

[Cotsen Children's Library](#) at Princeton University Library: collection includes magic lantern and other optical devices relating to toy and movable book effects

[Children's Literature Research Collections](#) at the University of Minnesota

[The Movable Book Society](#)