THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY

is especially fortunate to possess one of the most complete copies known of the Speculum Romanae magnificientiae, a collection of some nine hundred and ninety prints depicting views and monuments of Classical and early modern Rome. The Speculum arrived unheralded in Chicago in 1891 as a single and very small part of the extensive “Berlin Collection”—the stock of S. Calvary & Company, a firm of Berlin antiquarian booksellers, purchased by the University’s first president, William Rainey Harper.

The Speculum was then in the form of a scrapbook with the engravings and etchings mounted in four volumes. During 1965 and the early part of 1966, the volumes, because of deterioration of the poor mounting paper, were dismantled and cleaned. The prints were then matted and it is now possible for the Library to display for the first time a portion of this great treasure. The current exhibition attempts to show the nature and variety of the collection as a whole as well as indicate the rarity and quality of a number of specific pieces.

The Speculum Romanae magnificentiae was intended to be an expandable collection of prints. The core of the Library’s collection undoubtedly originated through the interest and acquisitiveness of some 16th century tourist or pilgrim to Rome. In the following three centuries the collection was enlarged as later owners added similar prints. Today, with nearly one thousand pieces, the Speculum has stopped growing, but its importance as an artistic and historical source is just beginning. In its new arrangement, there is a new opportunity to study it or simply look upon it as a beautifully varied “mirror” of Roman life and art as well as a fine collection of graphic art.

Funds for the purchase of the “Berlin Collection” were given by nine generous citizens of Chicago: Martin A. Ryerson, H. H. Kohlsaat, H. A. Rust, A. A. Sprague, Byron L. Smith, Charles R. Crane, Cyrus H. McCormick, C. J. Singer, and Charles L. Hutchinson.