

# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

## Translations

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#### I. Scope

This Statement covers translated works, in all subjects, formats (analog and digital), and languages. All other relevant Collections Policy Statements (e.g., subject- and/or format-based statements) should also be consulted when considering translated works for the Library's collections.

#### II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

#### III. Collecting Policy

As the de facto national library of the United States, the Library of Congress seeks to extensively collect U.S. publications in all languages and prioritizes collecting international publications in their original language. However, there are cases in which a translated copy of a work is acquired either in lieu of or in addition to the original work.

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the

Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

In general, the Library's collecting preference is for English translations of non-U.S. materials published in languages other than English. This is especially true when the publication is of a high research value, is of public policy interest, or meets a specified criterion denoted in the relevant Collections Policy Statement.

The Library does not collect translations of a work into multiple languages, except when denoted in the relevant Collections Policy Statement. Additionally, the Library may acquire a translation in addition to the original text when there is a significant difference in the tone or the informational content between the two copies.

Typically, the Library does not acquire translations from one non-English language into another or from English into another language. However, there are select exceptions to this policy, and non-English translations may be acquired when the translation meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Has exceptional scientific, historical or other impact, such as highly significant cultural works (e.g., primary religious texts, political philosophy, acclaimed literary works, etc.) that are translated from the original major language into less prominent languages such as Uighur, Kurdish or Swahili, and the translation represents a groundbreaking work.
- Has exceptional literary merit due to the prominence of the translator.
- Has important scholarly appendages such as extensive notes, introductory matter, or a bibliography.
- Possesses special distinction from the viewpoint of typography, design, or illustrative matter.
- Is important from the viewpoint of vocabulary and terminology, including works known to have had a significant impact on the development of a language.
- Is of Anglo-American constitutions, laws, codes, etc., as provided for in the [Law Collections Policy Statement](#).
- Has had fundamental socio-cultural impact on the country or countries into whose language the work has been translated and is essential for an understanding of the culture transfer process, or is an indispensable scholarly contribution to the study of that country.
- Is by an author whose writings the Library attempts to collect exhaustively.
- Represents a significant work which the Library does not possess in its original language.
- Is the only known work available in that language (e.g., Bible or Koran), or the most complete available part/s of these works.
- Is translated from a language that is not well known in the United States to a language that is more commonly known, provided that no English translation is available (e.g., Vietnamese to French, Kikuyu to Swahili, or Baluchi to Urdu).

In making the decision to acquire any translations, the existence in the Library's collections of one or more editions of other translations of the same original work should be taken into consideration.

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