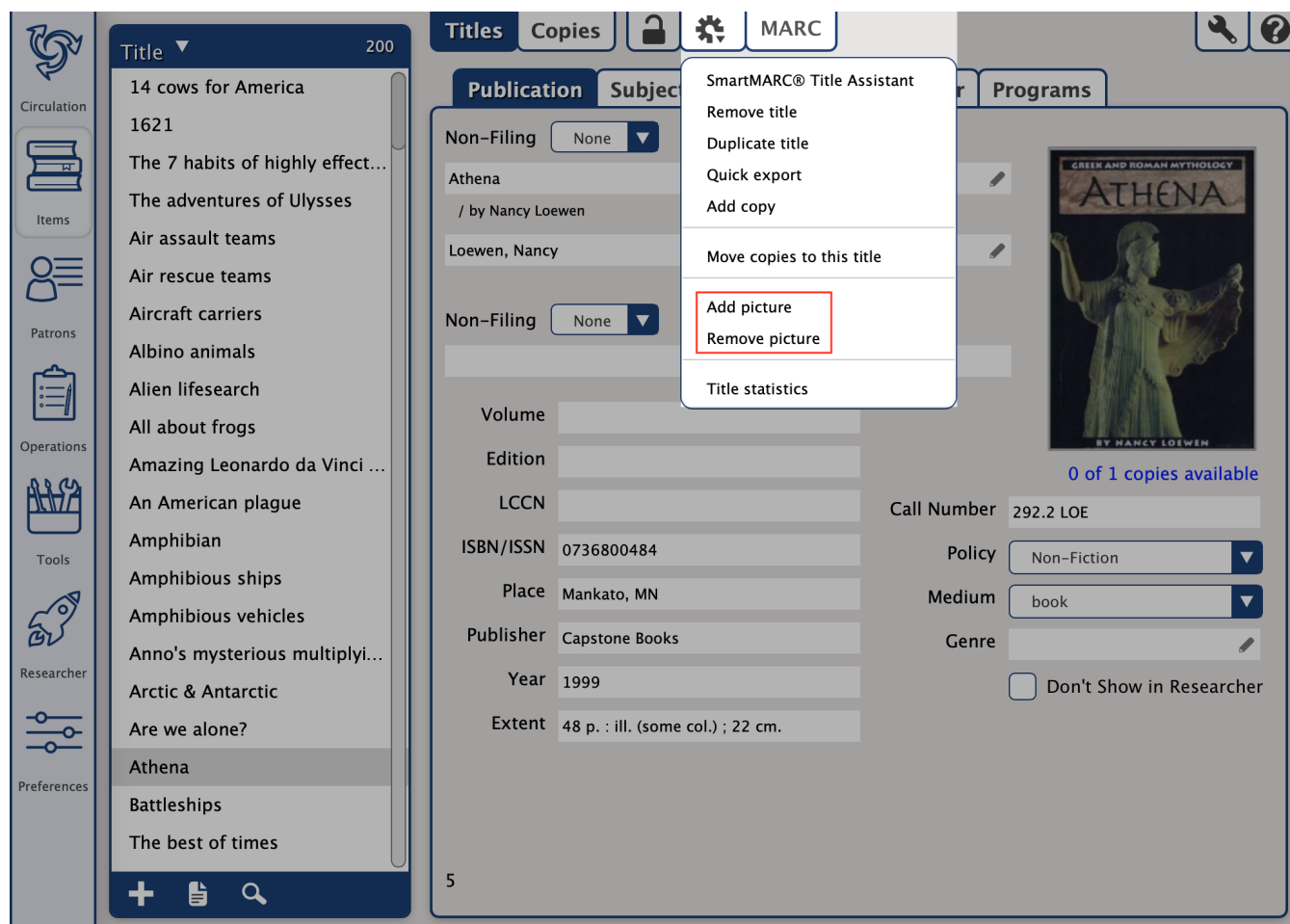# Worth a thousand words—Getting Cover Art in Alexandria

Tip for November 7th, 2016 | Updated August 23rd, 2021

Even if we like to think otherwise, covers are an important way to quickly judge the genre and topic of any book. You can make your collection more visual by filling in the cover art for your titles. But how do you get cover art?

There are several ways to get cover art for your catalog:

1. Alexandria automatically searches for cover art for your titles with ISBNs, so you will find much of this work done for you. For the items that the automated system doesn't cover, you will need to use one or more of the strategies below.
2. The SneakPeek add-on fetches covers, summaries, and more. Contact our Sales Team for more information.
3. You can find covers on Google, Amazon, LibraryThing, etc.* To get them in Alexandria, you can either import multiple covers at once or add them manually.
4. Tap into your budding photography skills and take the pictures yourself!

For #4, all you need is your phone or a digital camera. If you are taking the photo on your mobile device, here are some simple tips to get a good picture of that cover art.

1. Lay the book on a flat surface, like a desk, or up against a white wall.
2. Try to pick a place with natural lighting like next to a window. The flash from your camera and direct sunlight will reflect off the book cover so turn the flash off on your phone and pick a window that is not facing the sun's current position. Try to reduce shadows on the cover as much as possible. A large white surface can be used to reflect light from the window back onto your book, eliminating shadows on both sides.
3. Use a microfiber cloth to gently wipe off the camera lens. (You may also need to clean fingerprints off of the book cover.)
4. Line up the side and top (or bottom) edges of the book with the edges of the picture area. Don't zoom! Digital zoom will only lower the quality of the picture—and you can crop out that extra stuff later.
5. On a smartphone/tablet, tap the book cover on the screen to focus the lens.
6. Once you take your picture, you can crop it on your phone (in your Photos app, Edit the photo) or on your computer (using Preview or Microsoft Paint).

Drag and drop the picture onto the title's cover art in Items Management, and *tada*! Your book has cover art. (If you take the photo on an iPad, you can open Items from there and add the picture straightaway!)

ⓘ *** "Do I have to get permission? Is it ok for me to use cover art in my library?"**

This is not legal advice but… most people and experts say "Yes, it's ok." For one, you are not claiming that you created the art. Two, covers help sell books, so generally publishers (and authors) *want* you to use the cover art. Read more opinions here:

- Book jackets - can libraries put pictures of book covers on websites? (LibraryLaw Blog)
- How can Amazon show images of book and music album covers on its site without violating copyright law? (Quora)

ⓘ Still on version 6? Learn about switching to Alexandria 7!

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