



**SECURITY  
NETWORK**

## **To stamp or not to stamp? A University of Glasgow perspective**

Julie Gardham, Senior Librarian  
University of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections

**WORLD  
CHANGING  
GLASGOW**

**A WORLD  
TOP 100  
UNIVERSITY**

## To stamp or not to stamp: that is the question!



Astrid Beckers also on:   
@AstridBeckers1

Where do you place the stamp of your library?

search for a place without ongoing text... and...  
STAMPI!

'but there is..!'

STAMPI!!!



8:18 PM · Jul 3, 2023 · 1,442 Views

- Marking books and archival documents
- University of Glasgow as a case study
- Discussion to share other institutional practices and expertise

- A question that arises quite frequently in library security forums
- It is a question that provokes anxiety with a desire to do the right thing
- There is no straightforward answer or prescriptive guidance so there are many different institutional responses
- Started to think about this in the CERL security working group as some institutions (such as Leiden University) are starting to explore discontinuing the practice, whereas some institutions (such as mine) are flirting with the idea of reintroducing the practice
- Who is right?
- In this session I am going to talk about the issue from a very personal perspective using the University of Glasgow as a case study
- Then pass over to Wolfgang for a view from the BSB
- Discussion to share experiences, views and practises – and hopefully that will help clarify and shape future policy

## To stamp or not to stamp: why the question for me?



- Worked in Archives & Special Collections (rare books and manuscripts) since 1997
- Responsible for collection management (including security) across Archives & Special Collections since 2019
- Member of SWG working group since 2020
- Motivated to join to help formulate a security policy and devise/update procedures –including marking items

- I have worked in Archives & Special Collections at the University of Glasgow since 1997
- Responsible for collection management across our sites since 2019 and a member of the CERL Security working group since 2020
- Motivated to join the group as I found the QAT, guidance and generally supportive nature of the group incredibly helpful in starting to think about an area that I had not really given much serious thought previously
- Over the past couple of years, I have been using the QAT to help formulate an overall security policy and to start planning on updating and devising a whole raft of security procedures
- In reviewing our scattered (and often non-existent) procedures, I could not find a coherent policy on marking collections items
- So I have tasked myself with investigating past procedures with a view to deciding whether or not we ought to reintroduce stamping as a policy at Glasgow



- Medieval University founded in 1451
- Originally in town centre and now located in the west end of the city
- Large broad based research intensive University



- For background info for those of you who may not be familiar with Glasgow University : it is a medieval University, founded in 1451 (fourth oldest University in the English speaking world) – originally in the city centre and moved to the west end of the city in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Broad based research intensive University – in the world top 100; population of approximately 35,000 students (21k u/g; 14k p/g)

## The University Library

- Main library
- Archives & Special Collections



- The library today is a modern building – built in 1968 but substantially refurbished: currently ca. 2.5 million physical volumes (and ca 2 million digital resources/e books)
- Teaching stock is in main library building
- Remote store (Library Research Annexe) for lesser used research materials
- Our Archives & Special Collections (where I work) is split across two sites with two reading rooms
- We have a large space on level 12 of the library: about 200,000 early printed/rare books and ca. 300,00 manuscript items (from ca 400 medieval manuscripts to modern literary and artistic archives)
- We also have a large space spanning several floors in a shared building on the edge of the campus where the University Archives (records from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards) and a large collection of business archives (dating from 18<sup>th</sup> century to present) are held

## Main library stock processes v. heritage collection processes



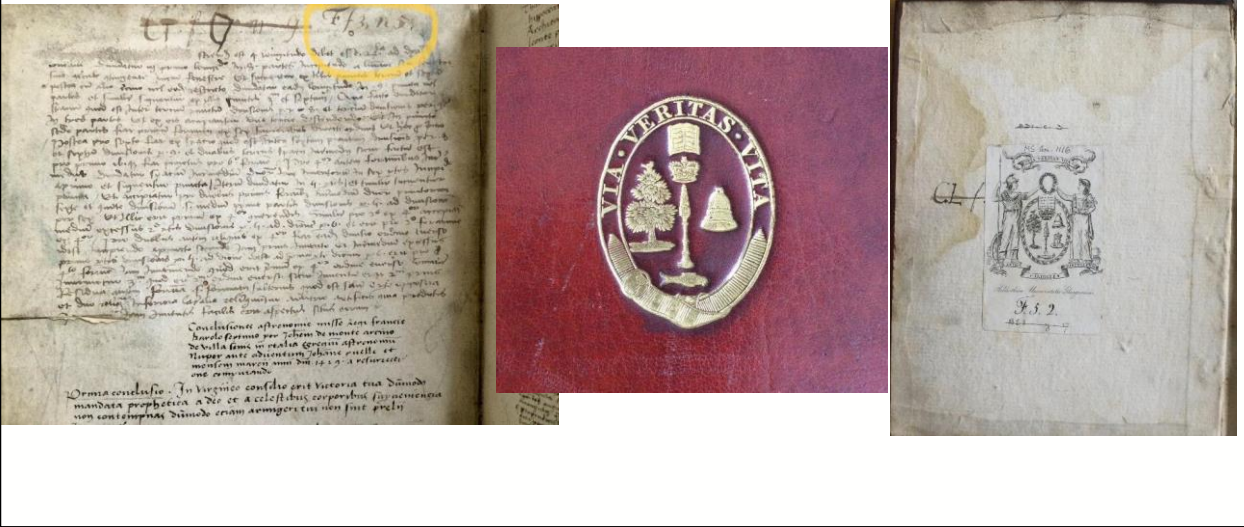
- All this disparate material is processed differently
- The main library collections today are processed, stamped and tagged electronically either by the supplier or by the main library collections team
- Although there is no expectation that any of this material will be retained permanently, there is no question that this modern (and often expensive) material should **not** be marked in this way
- Typical example of a modern book which will have been purchased to support teaching: each item is tagged electronically (desensitised when the book is issued or will set off alarm at barriers at entrance/exit to the library building); an adhesive bookplate is attached to the front pastedown; barcodes and shelfmarks are stuck on; the book is rubber stamped with the University of Glasgow name in three places: the title-page verso; the last page of text; the fore-edge



- However, what I am focusing on is our **heritage collections in Archives & Collections**
- These are our most valuable collection both in monetary and cultural terms
- Kept on closed access which minimizes the risk of casual theft
- But while these items were (I think) habitually (?) marked or stamped in the past, this practice has now fallen by the wayside or been applied inconsistently

## The past: University medieval manuscripts

- Bookplates, binding stamps & pressmarks

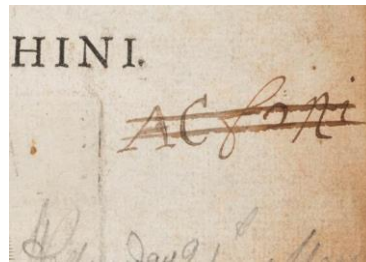
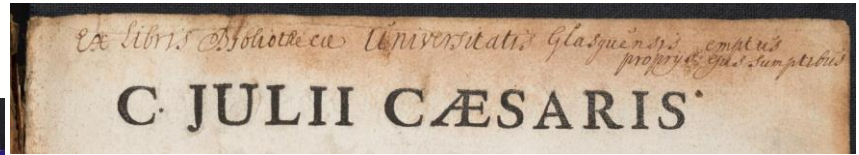
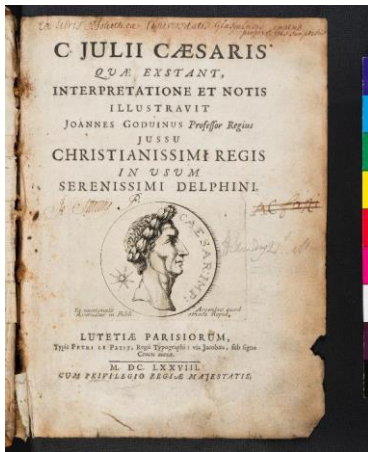


- But when I started thinking about this, I realised I wasn't entirely sure what had happened in this past – so I therefore began with reviewing the evidence of past marking strategies
- I am going to run through some examples of what I found here – these will all be familiar marking strategies
- Although we no longer have any of the books that would have formed the original fifteenth century library of Glasgow University, I started with a couple of medieval manuscripts that we know have been in our collections since at least the eighteenth century (in 1805 manuscripts catalogue)
- On the left: 15<sup>th</sup> century Euclid (MS Gen 1115) with early library pressmark FF3, n5 (circled) written in at beginning
- In the middle and right: 15<sup>th</sup> century Palladius (MS Gen 1116) in later (18<sup>th</sup> cent) library binding with University binding stamp, and University library bookplate, commissioned by the Foulis press (the University printers) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century
- I can't find any evidence for any earlier bookplates, so assume this is the first bookplate used by the University – perhaps prompted by a reorganisation of stock and move to a new library in 1740



- There is no evidence that any of the early manuscripts have ever been stamped

## The past: (now) rare printed books

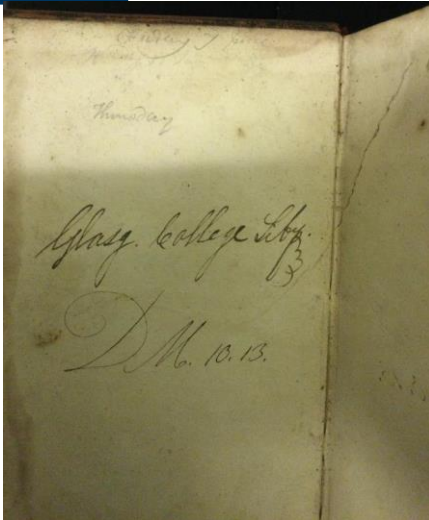


- The University had a library of some 20,000 printed books by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and most of these are still held in Special Collections as the '**Old Library collection**' so we can also look at a few examples of these volumes to get an idea of earlier approaches to marking the printed book collection
- Typical strategies here from a 17<sup>th</sup> century imprint include:
  - University ownership inscription in ink at the head of the title-page
  - A pressmark written on title-page in ink (here crossed out)
  - Sometimes (as here) you also get the name of the principal who authorised the sale – here John Stirling (from 1707)
- These inscriptions are also occasionally found within the text (so perhaps even in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was realised that the books might benefit from being marked internally, as well as in the obvious places)
- Wherever they appear, although these inscriptions rarely obscure the text, there is never any real consideration for the overall aesthetics of the page
- Finally, bookplates are usually applied to the pastedowns (so not all of them have survived subsequent rebindings) – in this example, we have the familiar

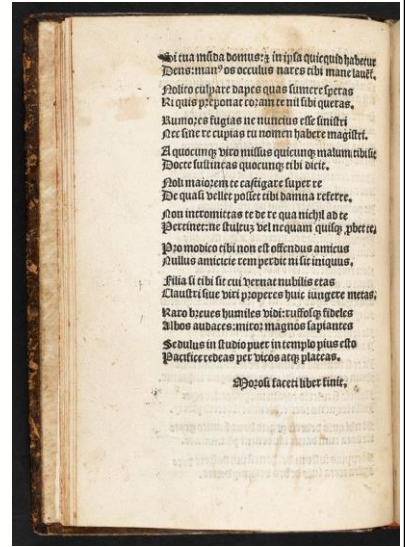
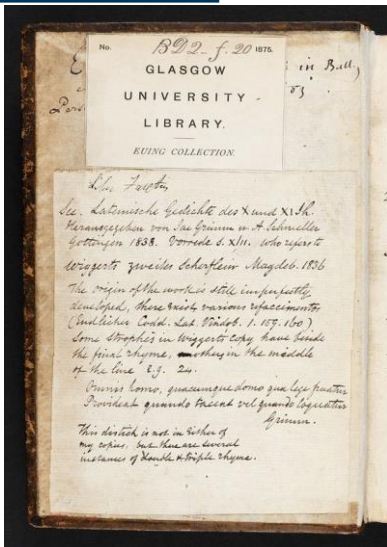
18<sup>th</sup> cent Foulis press bookplate again, as already seen in the medieval manuscripts

- **No** stamps in this book

## The past is not consistent: printed items

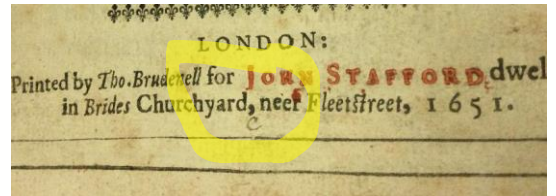
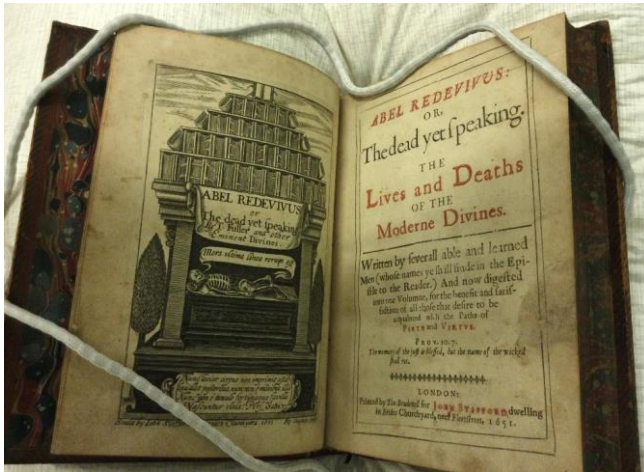


- And here are a couple of examples of 18<sup>th</sup> century books from this same collection
- On the left, a book simply marked with a handwritten note of ownership 'Glasgow College Library' accompanied by its pressmark, also written in ink
- On the right, a transfer from a class library into the main collection (note overlaying of bookplate and adaption of Foulis press bookplate to incorporate loan time)
- Again – no stamps in these books and - in fact - I could not find any evidence of institutional stamping in any of our Old Library books

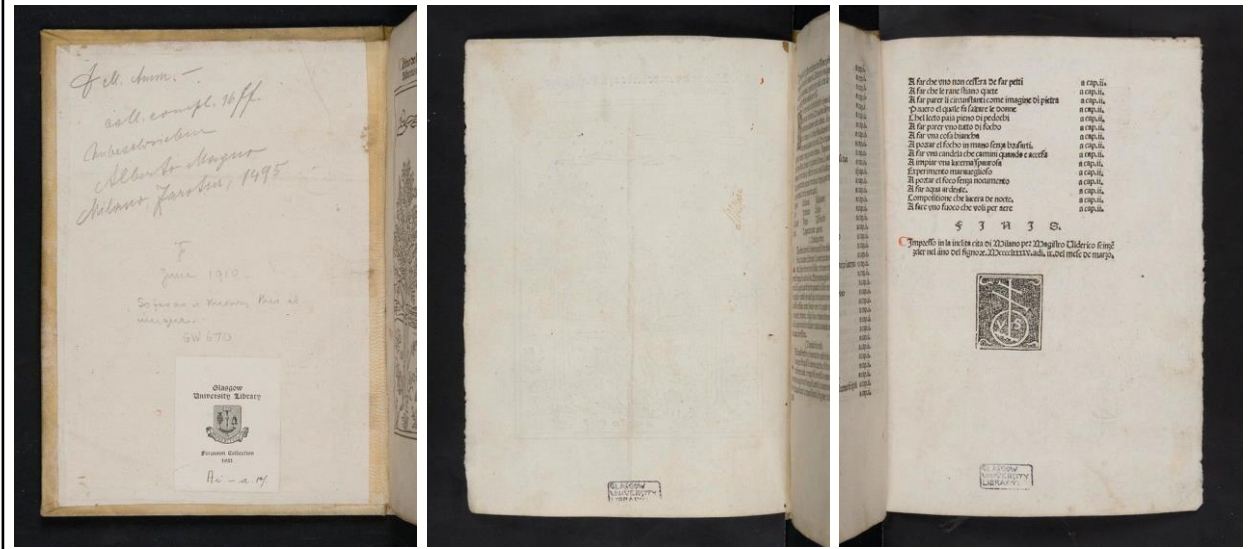


- At this point I began to be curious about when stamping began because I knew I had definitely seen institutional stamping in our books many times
- When have different marks been applied – is it dependant on the type of book/material or the collection or when the item was acquired?
- So I examined a few of our 15th century printed books from some of our other collections
- Here is one of the ten unique incunabula that we hold at Glasgow - the only known copy of a Facetus (Paris: ca. 1495-97)
- From the collection of William Euing, bequeathed to the University in **1874**
- Bookplate on front pastedown bearing the shelfmark in ink (rather unfortunately obscuring some earlier provenance details – which happens more often than it should)
- **No** stamps whatsoever

## The past is really not consistent: other markings

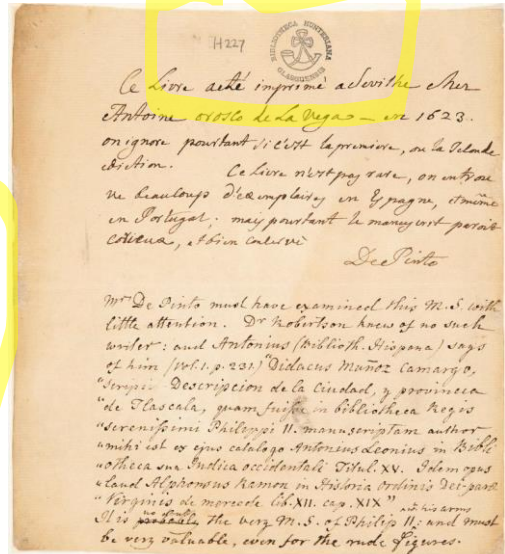


- But although stamping was apparently not being applied at Glasgow even in the late nineteenth century, this collection does bear evidence of another marking methodology that was seemingly in use for an unspecified period of time
- Here is a 17<sup>th</sup> century book from the same Euing collection
- It is marked with a small 'c' below the imprint – a sign that was so secret that people to this day rarely recognise it as a University of Glasgow processing mark, and that has unfortunately sometimes been confused as a previous owner's provenance marking



- Meanwhile, if we return to the incunabula but come forward nearly fifty years, we get a slightly different picture
- This is another of our unique incunabula – the only copy so far known of Albertus Magnus' Liber aggregationis, (Milan: 1495)
- From the collection of Professor John Ferguson purchased by the University in **1921**
- This book **is** marked extensively, just as in the modern example we saw: a bookplate on front pastedown with the shelfmark written on in ink; a stamp on t-p verso; stamp on last page of text (the only stamp it lacks is the one on the fore-edge)
- This does not have the 'c' below the imprint so this practise had evidently fallen out of favour by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (perhaps replaced by stamping?)

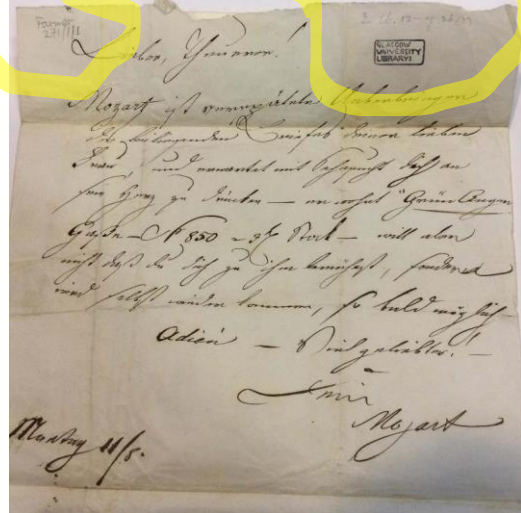
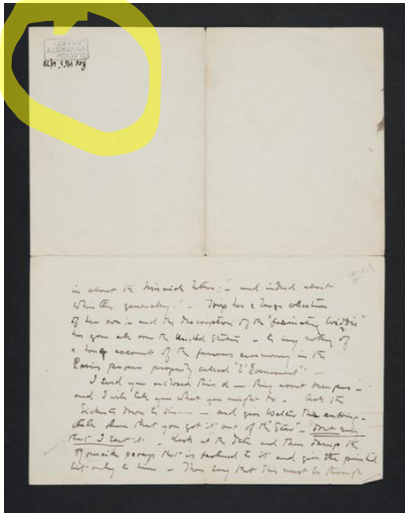
## The past is not consistent: manuscript items (various collections)



- I next turned my attention to manuscript and archival items from various collections
- On the left here we have a medieval manuscript from library of William Hunter – a collection that arrived at Glasgow in **1807**
- This codex has a Hunterian Museum bookplate on the pastedown bearing two pressmarks (one old and one new-ish) – both in ink; there are no stamps
- On the right we have an archival document from the same Hunterian collection, but with a specially commissioned horn stamp (probably applied when this collection as catalogued in the 1950s/60s); the identifying pressmark is pencilled in



## The past is not consistent: manuscript items (various collections)

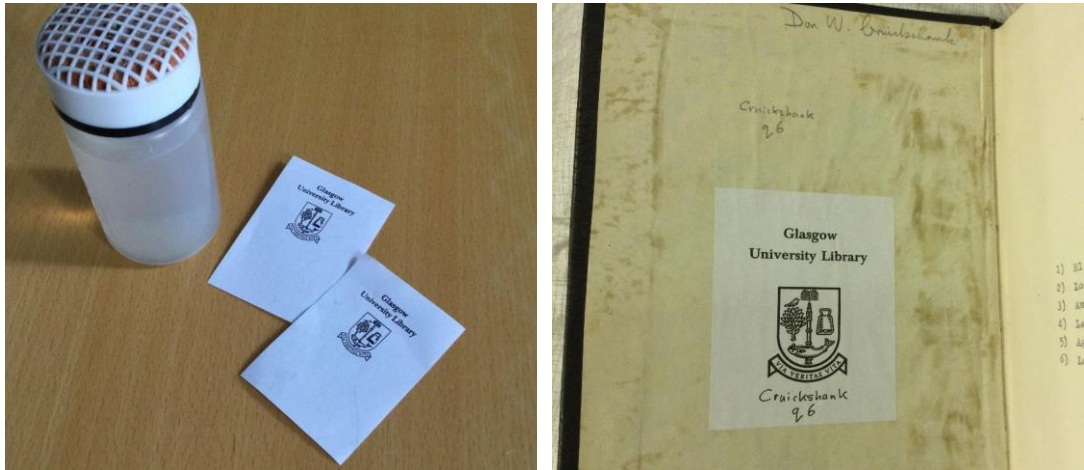


- On the left here we have a late 19<sup>th</sup> century letter from Oscar Wilde to James McNeill Whistler: this has a library stamp applied fairly unobtrusively on what would originally have been the blank verso of the page when the letter was folded; there is a previous pressmark in ink; and a current shelfmark in pencil
- On the right we have another 19<sup>th</sup> century letter from a different collection (Karl Mozart) – its current shelfmark is written in in pencil with a Glasgow University stamp on the written letter side of page (even though the verso of the letter is blank)



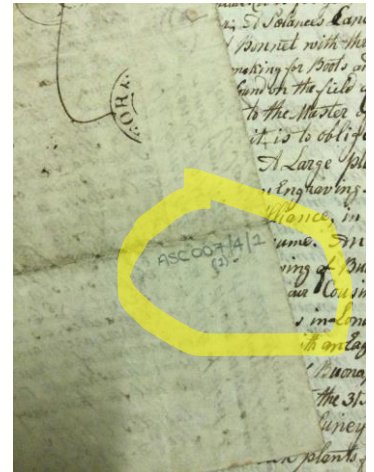
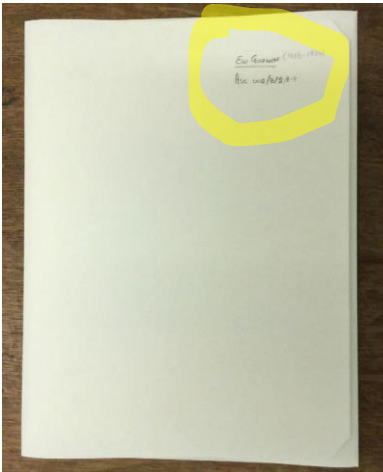
- Similar with items from University archives and business archives
- From left to right:
- GUA stamp on two important Adam Smith related documents from University Archives
- A business archive that has been – to our minds – somewhat inappropriately marked by the original owners with sticky labels with no care for future preservation
- And a shelfmark written in ink on another business archives item, also bearing the original shipbuilders ownership stamp – but that, of course, is ok because that is a mark of provenance!
- Which raises the question that if it is ok for the original owners to mark their possessions, why is **not** similarly ok for us to mark our institutional ownership, albeit in a more sensitive manner?

## The present: rare printed items



- I don't know at what point and why stamping stopped
- But having surveyed past practices, I tried to make sense of current procedures
- For printed rare books we currently apply water soluble bookplates, upon which we handwrite the shelfmarks in pencil – procedures which are quite clearly reversible
- No stamping

## The present: manuscripts and archives



- A couple of examples of recently accessioned/catalogued manuscript items
- One for a collection that technically does not belong to us yet – so in this instance, the shelfmarks are written on the folder but not on the items themselves – huge potential here for losing/mixing items up in issuing to readers (tho hopefully the catalogue descriptions should be detailed enough to show that they are ‘ours’)
- But usual practice to pencil shelfmarks on items as in the example on the right
- Again, there is no stamping

## What to do?



- Clearly disparate procedures and processes built up over hundreds of years of ownership
- Merged departments with different policies and procedures
- Subsequent lack of cohesion and procedure
- No clear instructions or guidance
- Lack of resource for cataloguing/processing/conservation means many items/collections are not described in detail
- Is it possible to devise a policy/procedures for such a wide ranging collection?
- Should any agreed marking be applied retrospectively for consistency?

- You can see from all these examples – both past and present - that even a cursory dip into the collections reveals a complete lack of consistency
- Basically, different collections have been treated in different ways, and the procedure followed and level of marking applied seems largely to have depended upon when the item arrived – irrespective of format – with stamping gaining favour at some point in the middle of the 20th century
- The current procedures are clearly inadequate
- I need to address the key question: **is it possible to devise a policy and range of procedures for such a wide ranging collection?**
- And furthermore – **should any agreed marking be applied retrospectively for consistency? And if we decide to do that, what would the methodology and resource implications be for dealing with thousands of different items?**

## To stamp or not to stamp: should there even be a question?

The decision to mark rare materials, and how, is an ongoing discussion within the special collections community. With the exception of individual items in archival collections, the failure to mark collections items compromises security and increases the likelihood that materials will not be returned if stolen.

Even the most conservative marking program results in permanent alteration of materials. Choices concerning marking depend on aesthetic judgment and a commitment to preservation balanced against the need to secure materials from loss and to assist in their identification and recovery. Each repository will have to weigh those competing needs. As with other security methods, all institutions will have different capacity for marking materials. Some variety of marking is better than none.

[ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding the Security of Special Collections Materials | Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) (ala.org)]

- As I mentioned at the start of the presentation, I am not the first to ask this question
- Although there are no hard and fast rules and it is the decision of each institution to formulate its own policy, there ARE professional guidelines that offer hints and help
- Here is a quote from the American Association of College & Research Libraries/RBMS guidelines
- This sums up the dilemma nicely: marking items is a deterrent to theft but **‘even the most conservative marking program results in permanent alteration of materials’** – there is obviously a particular pressure from our conservation colleagues, not to stamp or mark collection items in any permanent way (although here RBMS concedes that ‘some variety of marking is better than none’)

## Professional recommendations



- Security in Libraries:  
2.2 Libraries have a responsibility to make unique and (if possible) indelible marks of ownership (e.g. blind-stamping or selective page marking) on rare books, manuscripts and other special materials whenever this is possible and is consistent with their proper care and conservation.  
[CILIP rare books group 'Theft of Books and Manuscripts from Libraries: an advisory code of conduct for booksellers and librarians']
- In order to ensure the long-term preservation of, and access to, cultural heritage materials, special collections staff have an ethical obligation to take proactive steps in keeping collections intact and secure from theft, loss, and damage  
[ACRL/RBMS guidelines]

- Similarly the UK CILIP rare books group offers various policy documents, including one on the theft of books and manuscripts that was devised in partnership with the Antiquarian Booksellers Association
- In their section on security in libraries, the recommendation is to '**make unique and (if possible) indelible marks of ownership**'
- A stance which is again reiterated by the ACRL guidelines in stating that marking collections is an '**ethical obligation**'
- If we are all agreed that there should be some proactive marking of items (even if there will probably always be exceptions), the real question is *how* we make the marks.
- So - we are back to the original question of to stamp or not to stamp

## The case against marking collection items



- Detracts from value
- Will permanently change and can obscure materiality of an object (“even the most conservative marking program results in permanent alteration of materials”)

- But let’s just think a little more about the consequences of marking items **permanently** (by whatever means)
- As seen from many of the examples that I have shown just from our own collection, if not applied sensitively, they can detract from the market value of an item (although that should not be a massive concern if we are talking about items that we think we are retaining permanently rather than regarding as financial assets that might be sold on to make money)
- More of a concern is the fact that such marks can sometimes change or obscure the original materiality of an object
- Even more of a concern might be that if a potential thief knows where the institutional marks are made, even if these marks are indelible, they might remove such marks to destroy the evidence of institutional ownership – even if this means damaging items
- There are plenty of examples of rare book theft where items have been recovered with torn out title-pages, or bindings have been removed and replaced - a famous instance of this was the stolen Durham University First Folio - but the images here show some examples of recovered but damaged stolen books from Glasgow University



## The case against marking collection items??



- Cases of flyleaves being torn out/title pages removed/items being rebound to remove evidence of previous ownership

- As we all know, thefts sometimes occur by insiders who have the advantage of knowledge of the procedures taken to mark collections, and can therefore destroy or obscure evidence of ownership with relative ease
- We had one such distressing case of probable insider theft from an employee of Glasgow University in the 1960s
- There was a mix of manuscript, ephemeral and printed items that surfaced for sale many years later (1994)
- Original front boards with bookplates and pastedowns/flyleaves bearing shelfmarks were typically removed and items rebound (as shown here)
- Reading though the correspondence related to the incident, it was apparently very hard to prove ownership – not only because of the rebinding and destruction of marks, but also because there was evidence of (pre digital) catalogue records that recorded University ownership having been tampered with
- We probably never recovered all the misappropriated items

## The case for marking collection items



- Basic markings required for collection management (shelving, issuing to readers, digitization, keeping items in the right order)
- A deterrent against theft
- Clear proof of institutional ownership and identification of items
- Investment in marking/describing means enforcement agencies will equally invest in investigations for stolen items
- A Hippocratic case study

- On balance, however, the possibility of an insider thieving and damaging books to remove marks is not really an adequate reason for **not** marking book, so let's look at the positive case for marking collections
- At a very fundamental level, the addition of basic markings such as shelfmarks are critical for collection management – identifying and locating items and putting them back on the shelves in the right place for one thing
- And despite the previous example, clear (irreversible) markings **do** usually act as a deterrent to theft and can provide proof of ownership in cases of stolen items
- I have another case study concerning the early printed book shown here, because it seems that sometimes we don't even know missing items have been stolen ...
- This is a copy of Hippocrates: Aphorisms Lyon: 1545, going by the shelfmark of Hunterian Ch.4.12 (another item from our Hunterian collection)
- Like most books that we can't find, it was presumed misshelved and marked as missing in the online catalogue - until we were contacted out of the blue by an auction house in 2014

## Stolen, not missing



- They told us that they had received it to sell as part of a consignment of a number of books but they were querying it with us because they had discovered our bookplate
- As they said in the email, it was apparently “from the collection of William Hunter and has his bookplate to the front pastedown. There is also a handwritten library shelf reference (ch.4.12) which matches your reference in the online catalogue ... Perhaps you could confirm whether the volume is still missing from the library and, if so, any further details regarding where or when it disappeared”
- Clearly the bookplate and shelfmarkings in this case proved our ownership

Save Record Technical Display

Classification  Rare Books  Sorted by Title  Search   
(Search History)



**Uniform Title** Aphorismol. Latin  
**Title** Aphorismorum Hippocratis sectiones septem ex Franc. Rabelaei recognitione. Quibus ex Ant. Musae Commentariis adiecimus et octavam: et quaedam alia [Hippocratis Praesagiorum, lib. III; De ratione victus in morbis acutis, lib. IIII; De natura humana. Galeni Ars medicinalis ... Nicolao Leonicensi aphisque interpretibus].  
**Author** Hippocrates.  
**Published** Lugduni : Apud Seb. Gryphium, 1545.

Status	Loan Type	Location	Shelf-mark
Missing	Not for loan	Level 12 Spec Coll	Sp Coll Hunterian Ch.4.12

#### More Details

**Description** 1 v ; 16mo.  
**Indexed In:** Rawles, S. New Rabelais bibliography , 107  
**Contents** Includes a selection from the works of Antonio Musa Brasavola and the Ars medicinalis of Galen.  
**Provenance** Hodson.  
 Hunter, William, 1718-1783.  
**Place & Date** Lyon 1545  
**Printer/Binder** Gryphius, Sebastianus, 1493-1556.  
**Library Class** Sp Coll Hunterian Ch.4.12  
**Other Author** Rabelais, François, approximately 1490-1553?  
 Brasavola, Antonio Musa.  
 Galen. Techne iatrike. Latin.

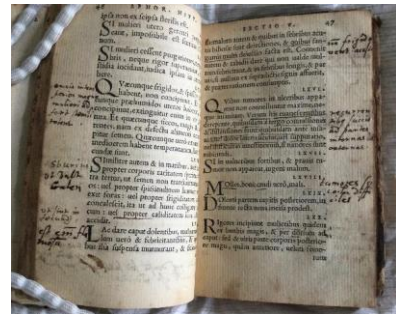
[Download link \(external\)](#)

- However, we (and the auctioneers) did want to prove beyond all doubt that the book was ours
- The basic online catalogue record did not actually provide much info about the copy specifics of the book
- We had no images of the book on file

## Proof of ownership from descriptive cataloguing



"Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, Hunterian Collection: Ch.4.12. Lacks u8 (blank). Old pressmark: A/O.9.8. Old calf. Extensive manuscript notes in at least two 16th century hands. Bottom of the title cut off and replaced with a slip bearing a manuscript ex libris: 'H. Hodson Non est vivere, sed velere vita'"

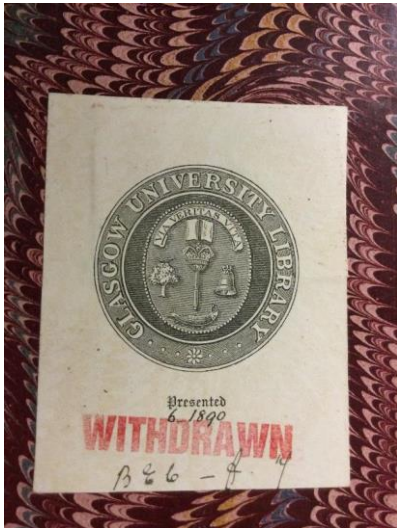


- But luckily for us, it had been catalogued in detail and listed (as item 107) in the 1987 work "A new Rabelais bibliography: editions of Rabelais before 1626"
- The description is quoted here: details of missing pages, ownership inscriptions and annotations
- This confirmed the item as an exact match
- We got the book back (although we still have no idea of how or when it 'went missing'): all's the auctioneer would tell us is that "We were consigned the volume by a local gentleman who was in the process of clearing out his mother's property and he found it tucked away in a cupboard. I believe that he has no idea how it came to be in her possession and we do not have any substantial basis to be suspicious of any wrongdoing on the part of the current vendor."
- The vendor had no objections in giving the book back and the auction rep commented "it would not have been so easy without the specific record details you were able to provide"
- Although I would say that the bookplating and shelfmarks *did* prove ownership in this case and is clearly how the auctioneer connected the book to Glasgow, I would also say that the descriptive cataloguing was the clincher that made the

process of returning our property so straightforward

- So obviously if we had the resources to photograph and catalogue items thoroughly, we wouldn't have any problems

## Conversely ...



- What happens when deaccessioned items are not stamped appropriately as withdrawn?
- Example of booksellers contacting us to query ownership

- Conversely, we have occasionally had contact from booksellers to query ownership when books have actually been deaccessioned but not stamped as withdrawn from stock
- Obviously, best practice is to **indelibly** cancel marks of ownership and ideally libraries should also maintain a proper record of disposed items and, even better, record the first destination of the sold item
- Unfortunately this is not a procedure that has been followed with any rigour at Glasgow, and although past practise used to be to date and initial withdrawn stamps, on occasions it has been difficult to unpick the deaccessioning process and prove one way or the other whether a queried item has been deaccessioned legitimately or has – in fact – been stolen
- Current practice is to simply stamp the item with a red ‘Withdrawn’ stamp that could easily be replicated
- So this is another example that demonstrates how marking books is an effective way of connecting lost items to owners
- And obviously here is another part of the procedure that I need to clarify and revise

## Record keeping and cataloguing

**Jim Mellas** @jimmellas · Aug 27  
 'Nobody was expecting it': @britishmuseum warned reputation seriously damaged & treasures will take decades to recover-Experts say loss of 1,500 items reveals lax cataloguing & boosts case for returning objects to countries #BritishMuseum @acropolis



The Observer

theguardian.com  
 'Nobody was expecting it': British Museum warned reputation serious... Experts say loss of 1,500 items reveals lax cataloguing and boosts case for returning objects to countries of origin

#BritishMuseum was warned of the theft in 2021 by a dealer. Investigation also shows that for 20 years items from the Greek collection were being sold online or through private auctions ... @cultureGR @BCRPM @UniteParthenon #ParthenonMarbles #BringThemBack



nytimes.com  
 British Museum Was Warned Gems Were Being Sold  
 An antiquities dealer contacted the museum with a case but the institution swiftly closed the case, according to sources.



- This need to devise and document procedures has become even more pressing with the recent high profile British Museum thefts
- Another insider theft, 1,500 – 2000 items are missing – obviously we are talking about museum objects here (many of which are difficult to mark) but interestingly, it is suggested that many of them may never be retrieved owing to 'lax cataloguing' and 'poor record keeping'
- The Director of British Museum has resigned and fingers are being pointed at staff for not caring for and cataloguing their collections
- I have already touched upon the benefit of cataloguing, description and digitisation in the case of our missing/stolen book – in that case, the item description depended upon an external bibliography for detail



## The way forward: to stamp or not to stamp

### PETRUS COMESTOR: HISTORIA SCHOLASTICA.

[Augsburg] Günther Zainer, 1473.  
 Fol. [1<sup>a</sup> 2-9<sup>10</sup> 10<sup>a</sup> 11-23<sup>10</sup>; [6], 1-CCXIII, [2] leaves, the last two blank.  
 Woodcut initials and border ornament.  
 ISTC ip00458000; GW M32161; Goff P458; BMC II 319 (C. 5460); Bod-inc P-184; CIBN P-223;  
 BSB-Ink P-301.

GIP number: P26  
 Shelf-mark: Sp Coli 809-b-1 (see [main library entry for this item](#))  
 Variant: 20/6v (f. 188v), col. 2, penultimate line: "... Pituq'm gallus || bis vocem dederit Ter me  
 es negaturus" as in Bod-inc copy 2, not as in Bod-inc copy 1 "Poftq'm gall[us] bis ||  
 vocem dederit. Ter me es negaturus es".  
 Note: In the blank space at the foot of col. 2 on 1/6r are blind impressions of type from part  
 of col. 2 of 1/4v.  
 Provenance: H. B. (16th century): ligature initials "H B" on 2/1r (f. 7v).  
 Johannes Cammerer (fl. 1536), of Aichen, Bavaria: inscription on front pastedown.  
 "[d]om[us] Iohannes Cam[er]er capellan[us] in Aachen & consanguine[us] me[us]  
 hoc volume[m] cum Morall[us] sup[er] tota[m] Biblilam [f]ratris] Nicolae de Lira  
 donadedit. iij feria 2<sup>a</sup> p[ost] Reministere anno d[omi]ni 1536 [...]".  
 Ingolstadt, Bavaria, Franciscans, S. Maria assumpta (founded 1275, dissolved 1802):  
 inscription in the top margin of 2/1r "Ad PP. Franciscano[rum] Ingolstadt]  
 B[ib]l[io]thecam" with shelfmark "C1.1.1.5.1.12" written in the lower margin.  
 Munich, Royal Library (now Bayerische Staatsbibliothek): duplicate - "Diplum" and "Inc."  
 Typ. N<sup>o</sup> 721" both in ink on front pastedown (the number "721" scored through and  
 replaced with "2663" in red crayon); "2663" repeated in pencil on rear pastedown.  
 Asher & Co. bookbinders: Berlin & London - sold book to William Fulmer

#### MORE IMAGE BOOK



- Ideally every item fully catalogued in detail and described with copy specific details
- Fully digitized (or at least sample images for high value/vulnerable items)
- But still a requirement for marking of some sort with different procedures for different collection types
- But if using bookplates, writing on reference codes etc, **do we also need to stamp items in designated places as an irreversible mark of ownership?**

- However, some of our collections (like our incunabula – a sample record is shown here in all its copy specific glory) are detailed more than adequately
- But the reality of stretched resources and capacity means this detailed level of cataloguing is not realistically possible for all of our collections
- The sad fact is that rare book cataloguing is a skilled and time consuming task that never seems to be an institutional priority; in a landscape of competing priorities, it is often overlooked and underfunded
- So marking items is therefore still clearly required
- But is **stamping** as a means of marking a necessity?
- To stamp or not to stamp is still the question

## The way forward: possible options!!



- Meaningless marks
- Micro-embossing
- Microtaggants
- Datadots
- Invisible ink
- Smart water tracer
- Synthetic DNA strands
- Needle marks
- Misleading book plates and labels
- Radio Frequency Identification systems (RFID)
- Magnetic strips
- Photographic systems
- Paper print

- I am going to conclude by exploring what we might do in the future
- There are now, of course, many sophisticated alternatives to stamping
- I am grateful to our preservation manager, Ela Wiklo, for pulling together a plethora of possible options – there are many different strategies available (not all suitable for heritage materials)
- All have advantages and disadvantages and different costs.
- Can't go through all – but one example that particularly appealed to Ela was the application of **datadots**
- These are basically microdots - small disks upon which may be etched a unique code, such as an alphanumeric sequence or a library name.
- The particles are about the size of a grain of sand.
- Once an institution orders Datadots, the company registers the code and never issues it to anybody else.
- They are apparently relatively cheap, and difficult to detect as the code must be viewed under magnification

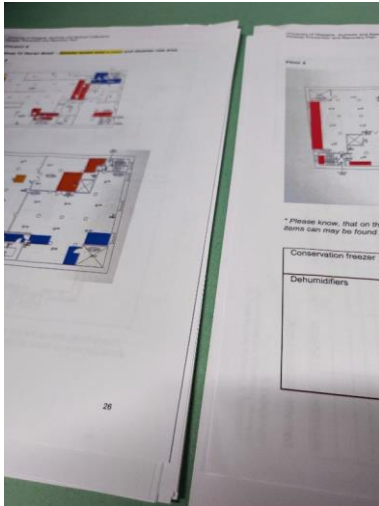
- They are used more commonly for marking currency, and documents such as passports – I would be very interested to hear if anyone knows of any libraries using these for heritage materials
- Because of resourcing issues, I don't think realistically that this is an option we will be exploring further, BUT

## The way forward: exploration of UV light pens



- We are exploring the idea of using invisible ink – in the form of UV security light pens
- These pens are designed for marking security codes, catalogue numbers and postcodes on valuable property (i.e. again commonly used on currency)
- The mark is invisible, and the ink will only appear when exposed under UV blacklight where it fluoresces blue.
- It provides a quick and effective form of hidden identification
- The theory is that by marking books with invisible UV codes, potential thieves are less likely to target library materials since they cannot determine which items have been marked and which have not. This acts as a deterrent, reducing the risk of theft.
- However – there are several considerations: for this security system to be effective, the library must maintain an accurate and up-to-date database containing the UV markings and corresponding book information

## The way forward: exploration of UV light pens



- Our main concern, however, is any long term effects – might these marks damage collection items?
- Fading over time is also an issue: the life expectancy of the UV ink in normal daylight is only up to 2 years; even in closed items such as books, UV ink markings will gradually fade necessitating periodic reapplication to maintain the security efficacy
- This, again, has potentially huge resource implications, but we are undertaking more research on the variety of the pens available and their life expectancies, and doing some tests on a number of different pens to see if any of them might be a feasible option
- So not an immediate solution but a possibility for the future

## The way forward: possible procedures



- **Bookplating with inked shelfmarks (rare printed books; manuscript volumes)**
- **Adding references in pencil (or ink?) to items (manuscript documents; archival items)**
- Stamping??? (rare printed books; manuscript volumes; archival documents)
- Shelfmarks in invisible ink with date of processing? (everything?)
- Invisible marks internally using UV light pens?

- What should our future policy at Glasgow be?
- We will continue to bookplate bound items; these will now be adhered by pastes by our conservation team – these will still be reversible, but a more robust solution than the previous water based stuck on plates
- There will be a continuation of pencil referencing with a possibility of moving to ink, if we can overcome ink fugitivity issues
- We will *possibly* reintroduce stamping of some collection material types such as bound volumes with rubber stamps – but this still seems like an old fashioned solution
- We will possibly try out invisible UV ink markings in agreed designated places
- The procedural documents and guidance to cater for all material types will be drawn up once decisions are finally made



# What are other institutions doing?

