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A word from the Editorial Team

Dear friends and enthusiasts of book provenance,

We are pleased to present the second issue of the CERL Provenance Newsletter, bringing together news and reports on book provenance from across the globe. This issue features summaries, brief reports, and concise reflections on engaging projects from female book owners, to lost Irish history, to founding collections; conferences marked by lively provenance discussions in Budapest and Uppsala, and exhibitions in Naples and Tartu; noteworthy items and collections from paper pianos to books from a Jesuit church in Lviv; and other developments of interest to the wider provenance community, including updates on thefts and restitutions.

Happy reading,

Editorial Team



Official launch of the Polish Provenance Database on the CERL platform

On December 3, at the international conference *Hinc Omnia* held at the University Library in Warsaw, the [Polish Provenance Database](#) (PPD, in Polish: *Polska Baza Proweniencyjna*) was officially launched. The database, seen as a “younger sister” to Cristina Dondi’s MEI but focused on post-1500 books, was created through a partnership between CERL and a group of seventeen Polish libraries, led by the University of Warsaw Library. PPD uses CERL authority data and connects provenance records to other CERL databases. It derives bibliographical descriptions from the [HPB Database](#) and owners’ authority files from [CERL Thesaurus](#). It will be linked to the [Material Evidence in Incunabula Database](#) via incunabula co-bound with later works, and images of the provenance marks will be stored in the [Provenance Digital Archive](#) and also linked to the PPD records.



Polish Provenance Database

PPD is a tool modelled on other CERL databases – MEI and HPB Provenance – designed to collect, store and share information about material evidence (such as ownership marks, bindings, reading marks) of books printed after 1500 that are related to historical or modern Poland. PPD serves two primary purposes: 1) to facilitate data integration between Polish institutions and the CERL environment and 2) to enhance the discoverability of the collected data for various audiences.

PPD is interconnected with other CERL databases, including the Heritage of the Printed Book database (HPB), from which it derives bibliographical information on book editions, and CERL Thesaurus (CT), which provides authority files for personal and corporate records of owners, as well as geocoordinates. Additionally, PPD links with the Provenance Digital Archive (PDA), a repository for images of material evidence, where the images are stored and associated with corresponding data in PPD. It also communicates with Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI) through co-bound items.

The creation of PPD was guided by three main goals: the primary aim is to develop shareable datasets that can later be reused by libraries and researchers, both locally in Poland and internationally. The second principle is to design a tool that is flexible and easy to integrate into various library workflows. Since such a database is not—and will never become—a printed catalogue that freezes work permanently, the PPD will equip librarians with a basic tool that allows them to determine the level of detail in their descriptions and the amount of information they include, at a pace they find feasible. The third goal is that the database is not intended to be solely a cataloguing endeavour. Provenance studies – especially in book history – encourage librarians, IT specialists, and researchers to collaborate, and PPD will serve as an active tool and research infrastructure, offering more than simple browsing.

The PPD is currently in a testing phase and will undergo a six-month evaluation by consortium libraries to improve its usefulness for both libraries and researchers. The database is available in both English and Polish, with plans to include more partners, including international ones, in 2027. The oversight and implementation of the PPD are managed by Dr Martyna Osuch and Dr Wojciech Kordyzon, representing the University of Warsaw, with development work carried out by Helena Nebel from the CERL Data Conversion Group in Göttingen. Contact: martyna.osuch@uw.edu.pl and wojciech.kordyzon@uw.edu.pl

Martyna Osuch, Wojciech Kordyzon (University of Warsaw)

Projects and ongoing research

Interpreting provenance for a public audience: 'Making Visible' at the Royal College of Physicians, London

The heritage library at the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), London, preserves the 500-year history of book collecting by and for the members and fellows of England's oldest medical royal college. A new site-specific art intervention was installed in the library in summer 2025. 'Making Visible' was created by artist and researcher Catherine James with assistance from RCP staff and volunteers. In it, James reveals the hitherto under-recognised contribution of women to the creation of what might usually be considered to be a 'gentlemen's library'.

In 'Making Visible' 1,996 rare books in the lower floor of the library have been wrapped in conservation-grade blue paper, representing the proportion of the total library that was donated by, used, or created by women. This contribution has been the object of study in James' doctoral research, funded by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership, in which she has surveyed every page of every pre-1714 book in the library (approximately 6,700 volumes dating from the Tudor and Stuart periods of English history).



One major finding from James' research is that the standard history of the RCP library – that it was refounded in 1680 by a donation of books from Henry Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester, after whom the library space is named – has misrepresented female agency in the transfer of the books. When Dorchester died in late 1680, he left all his books to his daughter, Grace Pierrepont. Fellows of the RCP had been keen to acquire the library for the college, to refound it after most of its earlier contents were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. However, no formal agreement between the RCP and Dorchester was ever made. Grace Pierrepont decided to donate the library to the college herself, on the understanding that first a suitable space would be adapted to house the books. They only finally arrived in 1688.

As well as being the storage space for thousands of rare books, the modern Dorchester Library at the RCP is also an in-demand venue for conferences, lectures, dinners and receptions. The installation 'Making Visible' is therefore seen by a wide range of visitors and guests likely with no prior knowledge or awareness of library

history or provenance research. The unexpected visual intervention in an otherwise traditionally-presented library space encourages viewers to consider the history and context of books that are otherwise generally considered as no more than a decorative feature.

A film about the creation of 'Making Visible' is available to watch online at: <https://history.rcp.ac.uk/exhibitions/body-knowledge/making-visible>. On the same page you can also find information about how to visit 'Making Visible' in person.

Katie Birkwood (Royal College of Physicians, London)

Project on women's libraries at HAB Wolfenbüttel: *Fürstinnenbibliotheken und Wissenspraktiken im deutschsprachigen Raum des 18. Jahrhunderts: Rekonstruktion, Funktion und Bedeutung*

The Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel in collaboration with the Trier Center for Digital Humanities has launched a new research project entitled *Fürstinnenbibliotheken und Wissenspraktiken im deutschsprachigen Raum des 18. Jahrhunderts: Rekonstruktion, Funktion und Bedeutung*.

The project investigates the libraries and scholarly practices of female rulers in the German-speaking lands during the eighteenth century. Focusing on around 100 documented collections, it seeks to reconstruct these libraries and to analyze the patterns of book ownership and use among these women.

In an initial pilot phase, the team will develop a digital research platform that enables information on the books held in these libraries to be recorded and accessed as structured data.

The project is conducted by Dr Caren Reimann, Dr Maximilian Görmar, Holger Bühring, and Rebecca Sperl in Wolfenbüttel and Dr Joëlle Weis, Svenja Wagner, Julia Fischer and Rebecca Robinson in Trier. It is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).



Fig. 1. Portrait of Duchess Elisabeth Sophie Marie of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and her library. Copperplate engraving by Anton August Beck and Johann Georg Schmidt, used as frontispiz in: Georg Ludolph Otto Knoch: *Bibliotheca Biblica*, Braunschweig, 1752.

Herzog August Bibliothek, Sig. BA I, 633.
Source: HAB Wolfenbüttel.

Books, Bindings, and Dispersal: Provenance Research on the Host Volumes of the Old English N-Psalter

From the 1960s onwards, fragments of one and the same 11th-century Latin psalter with Old English glosses surfaced in European archives and libraries: in Cambridge, UK (Dietz 1968); Haarlem, the Netherlands (Derolez, 1972); and Sondershausen, Germany (Gneuss 1998). These fragments of what has been called the "N-Psalter" had once been used as binding materials, but it had not been recorded from which books they had been removed, making research into when and where the 11th-century manuscript had been disassembled impossible. This situation changed dramatically following recent discoveries in Elbląg, Poland,

and Alkmaar, the Netherlands, of more fragments of the N-Psalter, still inside their host volumes. These findings not only substantially expanded the known corpus of the Psalter's *membra disiecta*, but also opened new perspectives on the early modern provenance of the manuscript.



In 2020, the first Elblag fragments were identified in the C. Norwid Library, Elblag, in one of the early printed books from the collection of Samuel Meienreis, a sixteenth-century Calvinist theologian active in Royal Prussia (then part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). This initial finding consisted of two endleaf guards cut from a single folio, discovered in Caspar Waser's *Archetypus Grammaticæ Hebraeæ* (Basel, 1600; C. Norwid Library, Elblag, SD. XVI.1480 – see image) (Opalińska et al. 2023). Around the same time, in 2022, more fragments of the N-Psalter were found, this time in the Regional Archive of Alkmaar, the Netherlands: no fewer than twenty-one fragments were identified in a four-volume edition of Henri Estienne's *Thesaurus Graecae linguae* (Alkmaar, Regionaal Archief, 135 A 9) (Porck 2024).

These host volumes contain valuable information about where and when the N-Psalter may have been repurposed by a local bookbinder. The acquisition of the Alkmaar host volumes is well documented: archival documents revealed that they had been bought in Leiden, around 4 June 1601 (during the time of the book auction of Daniël van der Meulen's library, but not at the auction itself). The Alkmaar volumes were bound in a manner strikingly similar to the Elblag volume belonging to Samuel Meienreis (a laced-case parchment binding; double supports with herring-bone sewing; endbands with green threads, with tiedowns). As it turned out, Meienreis also had a connection to Leiden: he studied theology there between December 1600 and April 1602. Further research into the Meienreis' collection, and a new discovery, strengthened the case for Leiden. Eight more fragments of the N-Psalter were found in another similarly bound volume from the same collection: *Concordantiæ Bibliorum utriusque testamenti, veteris et novi...* (Lugduni, 1560; C. Norwid Library, Elblag, SD.XVI.2430). A handwritten provenance note indicates that Meienreis acquired this book during his student days in Leiden (Opalińska 2024).

The Leiden provenance was further strengthened by the successful identification, on the basis of binding characteristics, of the host volumes of the Haarlem and Cambridge fragments. The Haarlem host volume

turned out to be a book that was sold at the book auction of Daniël van der Meulen in Leiden, on 4 June 1601 (Porck 2024), while the recovered Cambridge host volume had an ownership mark of Balthasar Lydius (1576-1629), who studied theology in Leiden between 1599 and 1602. Spectacularly, the Cambridge host volume, whose binding was partially altered during conservation, retains original pastedowns bearing offset marks from the removed parchment strips of the N-Psalter (Opalińska 2024). Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of Leiden's early seventeenth-century book trade and auction culture in the dispersal of medieval manuscript fragments, as well as its vibrant academic milieu, which attracted students and book-buyers from across Europe.

These recent discoveries have formed the starting point of an international, collaborative research project into the N-Psalter and its host volumes, coordinated by Monika Opalińska and Thijs Porck. The project has organised an international conference [Medieval Fragmentology and the Fragmented Old English Glossed N-Psalter](#) in September 2024 and an edited volume is in the works. The search for new fragments (and host volumes) also continues and two promising avenues have been identified. The first is Leiden University Library, which is known to have bought many books at the book auction of Daniël van der Meulen, where the Haarlem host volume had also been acquired. The second concerns the *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*, which was dispersed after the Second World War along with the Elbląg Library: out of 263 Meienreis' volumes, only 123 have been found so far, raising the possibility that further fragments may yet be recovered along with his books.

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Monika Opalińska (University of Warsaw)

Thijs Porck (Leiden University)

Spanish project: library of the Duques de Osuna led by the Rare Book's Group of REBIUN (Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas)

[The Grupo de Patrimonio Bibliográfico](#) from the Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas (REBIUN) will be celebrating its [5th congress](#) on the 16th-17th April at the Universitat de Barcelona, organized by its CRAI Biblioteca.

It will be an excellent opportunity to launch the website of a project the *Grupo* has been long working on: the identification, description and dissemination of their respective book collections from the Casa de Osuna. This collection is considered the most relevant 19th century Spanish private library and was created in 1786 by the IX duke of Osuna. The collection grew considerably in the 19th century thanks to the incorporation of books from María Josefa Alonso Pimentel y Borja, countess-duchess of Benavente, the Casa de Benavente itself, and the Casa del Infantado. In 1884 the state acquired the collection, and it was distributed among the Biblioteca Nacional, the Senate and Congress libraries, and several public and provincial Spanish libraries, some of which later became university libraries.



Fig. 1. Supralibros of Pedro de Alcántara Téllez Girón y Pacheco, duke of Osuna (1755-1807) (left) and María Josefa Alonso Pimentel y Borja, countess-duchess of Benavente (1752-1834) (right).

So far, the *Grupo* members have identified in their libraries a total of 9,917 copies in 8,002 editions, which can be searched through their respective online catalogues.

Marina Ruiz Fargas (CRAI Fons Antic, Universitat de Barcelona)

Exploring the founding collection: Benedykt of Koźmin's donation for the University of Krakow

An ongoing research project to discover the books bought with a donation by Benedykt z Koźmina (of Koźmin) to the Collegium Maius library has been rich in discovery in recent months. The most important was the identification of the whole collection; it is still ongoing with approximately 85% of the titles specified in the *Liber perceptorum* (a manuscript that served as an accounting book for the foundation curators, now held at the Jagiellonian University Archives) identified and found at the Jagiellonian Library.

On 18th November, 2025, we were glad to host a multidisciplinary seminar organised by prof. Justyna Kiliańczyk-Zięba (Faculty of Polish Studies, JU), *Benedykt of Koźmin. The founder and his legacy*. The covered topics included the founder's last will (1559) and its legal and literary implications, introductory remarks on the bookbinding style of the collection, how the books selected for purchase could be viewed within the broader discourse on natural sciences and philosophy in the 16th century and what we know about their impact on the University of Krakow's teaching, the analysis of Benedykt of Koźmin's portrait (still held at the Jagiellonian University Museum—Collegium Maius), as well as the financial history of the foundation that stopped functioning after only eighty years in 1646 (despite having been planned *in aeternum*). We also greatly benefitted from a general view of how the University of Krakow worked in the 16th century. Connected to the foundation but more to its patron were papers on how another Krakow scholar,



Jan Brożek (Joannes Broscius, 1585–1652) worked to preserve the university history (part of which was Benedykt of Koźmin's legacy) and some remarks on the identification of Benedykt of Koźmin's personal library that has also—in part—been bequeathed to the Collegium Maius library.

The seminar brought forth some surprises. The main one was probably a hypothesis that not all books bound “ex fundatione D. Benedicti a Cosmin” were actually bought from the funding available: there was

a subconscious process of merging the foundation's collection with the whole Collegium Maius library in the minds of professors and librarians of that time. The post-seminar articles will be published in two issues of "Terminus. Journal of Early Modern Literature and Culture" ([open access](#)) in 2026.

The identification, as well as the broader research, is ongoing; meanwhile, we're planning to publish the complete catalogue of Benedykt of Koźmin's foundation and to organise an exhibition of the collection that will be held at the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow in November and December 2027. For the library as a whole this project has brought another delight: on 26th November, 2025, we organised our first (and hopefully annual) Jagiellonian Library Day to celebrate 266 years of Benedykt of Koźmin's last will that was paramount for the development of our library and, indeed, the whole university.

Zuzanna Ruszar (Jagiellonian Library)

The project *Registration of incunabula provenance in Poland (stage II)*



In the 2026 scholarship programme of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, one of the projects selected for funding is *Registration of the Provenance of Polish Incunabula – Stage II*. The project aims to record the provenance of selected incunabula held mainly by smaller institutions as a means of preventing the theft of works of art. The registration will include detailed descriptions of the objects in the Material Evidence in Incunabula database managed by the Consortium of European Research Libraries.

Documenting the provenance of cultural objects and disseminating this information is currently regarded as one of the most effective methods of preventing art theft and, in the event of theft, as one of the most reliable ways to enable the identification and eventual recovery of historic objects.

This undertaking constitutes a continuation of the project *Registration of the Provenance of Polish Incunabula*, which was carried out under a Ministry of Culture and National Heritage scholarship in 2022. The project is run by dr Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła (Ossolineum National Library, PL).

Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła (Ossolineum National Library)

The project *Books of Duchesses: Mapping Women Book Owners, 1350–1550*



Books of Duchesses

Mapping Women Book Owners, 1350-1550

S.C. Kaplan (UCSB)

&

Sarah Wilma Watson (Independent Scholar)

The digital resource *Books of Duchesses: Mapping Women Book Owners, 1350–1550* is an interactive website that draws on a database aggregating information about late medieval secular women's book collections from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Through the various maps and familial relations, users can visualize networks of manuscripts, texts, and readers across generations and language boundaries. They are also able to trace books' and women's movements within an individual's lifetime in some well-documented instances.

The project currently has information on approximately 300 women owners, 2,342 books (1,963 of which have locations attached to them), and 1,612 texts in 22 different languages. Importantly for provenance research, Books of Duchesses includes documentation and bibliographic references for books that are presumed to no longer exist (labeled NE for non-extant), allowing users to trace those books across different owners even though the physical object has been lost.

Books of Duchesses was created by Dr S.C. Kaplan (Louisiana Tech University) and Dr. Sarah Wilma Watson (Independent Scholar) in 2018. As of 2024, it is maintained by Dr. Kaplan. Guest Editors are welcome, so if you would like to contribute information to the project, please get in touch at booksofduchesses@gmail.com.

S.C. Kaplan (Louisiana Tech University)

The provenance collection of Archibald Corble: the digitisation of the printed works by KU Leuven Libraries

Archibald Corble (1883–1944) was a British fencer and bibliophile. He received his first fencing training in 1902, after which he continued to fence throughout his life. Before the First World War, he took part in several competitions, including the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. He also gave demonstrations of ‘Old Swordplay’, i.e. sixteenth-century fencing. Despite the war, he continued his training and went on to win the British Amateur Sabre Championships in 1922 and 1927. Alongside his fencing activities, he built a collection of bibliophilic fencing works. To expand his collection, Corble acquired partial or complete collections from fellow bibliophile-fencers, including Cyril Matthey, Alfred Hutton, J.R. Garcia Donnell, Frederick Pollock and Jacopo Gelli. Many of the books in his collection have been rebound in new and personal bindings with armorial stamps, or have an ex libris inside to indicate ownership, reflecting the preferences of Corble and many previous owners. Consisting of around 1,900 copies dating from the 15th to the 20th century, and mainly from France, England, Latin America, Italy, and Germany, the collection attracts many scholars due to its diversity. Its scope extends far beyond the art of fencing. It includes treatises on duelling (as well as religious pamphlets warning the public of the dangers of duelling), works on self-defence, and books on the use, manufacture, and development of bladed weapons and firearms. There are even plays, war songs, and novels. Many of the works are illustrated with engravings, etchings, and lithographs that bring the history of fencing to life.

The destruction of the Leuven University Library at the start of the First World War caused widespread outrage, and support committees were established in twenty-five countries during the war. The story of the destruction was thus well known internationally, including to Archibald Corble. He first suggested donating his collection to the University Library of Leuven in 1921. Fortunately, he donated his collection shortly after the second fire at the University Library in 1940. The collection consisted of two parts: the books mentioned above, which are now held by [KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections](#), and Corble’s personal items, including letters addressed to him, pictures of fencers, notes and commentaries, which are now kept at KU Leuven’s [University Archives](#).

In recent years, KU Leuven Libraries’ service [Digitisation and Enrichment of Collections](#) has carefully created the metadata and digitised the book collection. Creating the

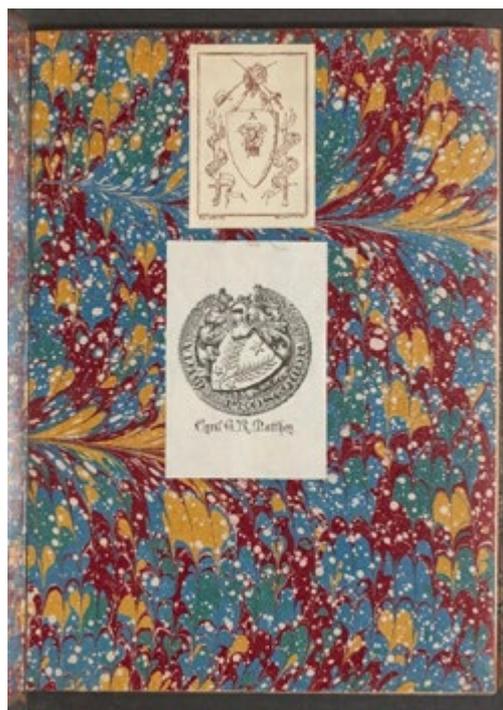
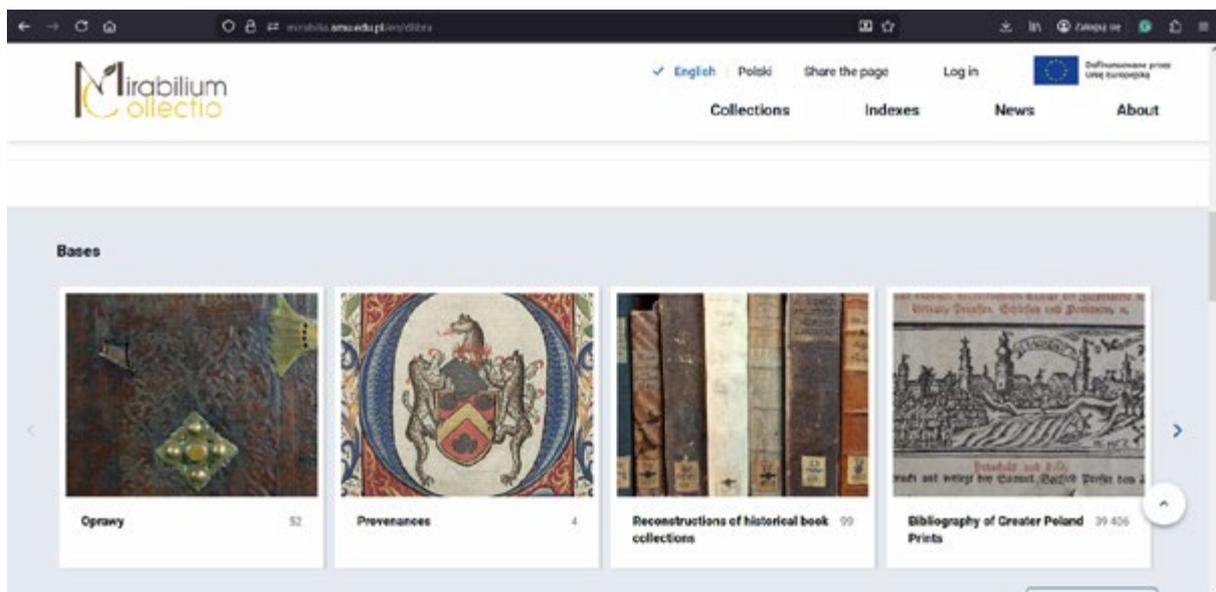


Fig. 1. Ex libris of Archibald Corble and the former owner Cyril Matthey, in S. Fabris, *Scienza e pratica d'arme di Salvatore Fabris [...] Das ist: Herrn Salvatore Fabris [...], Italiänsche (sic) Fechtkunst [...] in das Teutsche übersetzt und heraus gegeben von Johann Joachim Hynitzschen*. Leipzig: zufinden bey Johann Herbord Klotzen, 1713. KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections, R4B85. Bibliographic description and all images available [here](#).

metadata for the Corble collection proved to be complex, primarily due to the large amount of provenance data present in the books. Digitisation was carried out in KU Leuven Libraries' state-of-the-art [Imaging Lab](#) using specialised infrastructure, such as the Qidenus book scanner. This work is now almost complete, and titles in the public domain can be accessed via the [Corble fencing collection - KU Leuven](#). Those fascinating works are waiting to be browsed by people from around the globe.

An Smets (KU Leuven)

The project *Mirabilium Collectio*



At the [University Library in Poznań](#), work is nearing completion on the creation of a digital platform for special collections under the name *Mirabilium Collectio*. In addition to standard collections and digital library presentations, the platform will feature specialized databases, including three of particular interest to provenance researchers: the Historic Bindings Database, the Provenance Database, and Reconstructions of Historical Book Collections. Once launched, the platform will be available [here](#).

Contact persons: [Jakub Łukaszewski](#), Early Prints Section, [Aneta Müller](#), Early Prints Section, [Dr hab. Rafał Wójcik](#), Deputy Librarian.

Rafał Wójcik (Poznań Univeristy Library)

Case studies

The mystery of the replica paper piano keyboard that found its way from the personal imperial library of Austrian Empress Elisabeth, 'Sisi', to the National Library of Scotland

An enquiry about a puzzling retroconversion catalogue record has led to the surprising and intriguing re-discovery of a full-size paper replica piano keyboard made for Archduchess Sophie of Austria (1805-1875) by woman composer Teodozja Papara (1797-1873) and formerly held in the personal imperial library of Austrian Empress Elisabeth (1837–1898), known as 'Sisi'.



Fig. 1. Teodozja Papara. *Freulein Theodosia Edle von Papara[s] Fortepiano Schule...* Lemberg Stadt [Lviv]: Theodosia von Papara, 1856. NLS shelfmark: [Mus.C.I.170](#).

The full-size keyboard is beautifully presented, made of paper pasted onto cardboard with inside folds covered in silk brocade fabric and outside front cover in red velvet with gold tooling. It contains educational notes on music notation and theory in German and Polish. There are also manuscript annotations with some hand-colouring.

This item is interesting in many aspects: the creator, the place of creation, the practical use of such paper keyboards and the provenance. The keyboard with a publishing date of 1856 was created by a woman composer in Lemberg (Lwów, Lviv) which at varying times has been part of Austria-Hungary, Poland and Ukraine. Papara composed mainly piano pieces and published educational piano tutors. The replica paper piano keyboard was part of a piano school she compiled and a more complete copy is held in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna.

The composer registered several patents relating to the paper piano keyboard which is quite extraordinary for a woman composer in the middle of the 19th century. Research into this fascinating keyboard includes the provenance history: while the keyboard was created for Austrian Archduchess Sophie, Sisi's aunt and mother-in-law, who was in her early 50s at the time and less likely to have used this herself for study, it could very well have been a presentation copy which was then taken into the imperial personal library of Sisi and may have been used by other members of the imperial court, for example her daughters.



Fig. 2. Teodozja Papara (1797-1873) pianist and composer. In the mid 1850s she registered several patents for her paper piano keyboard design. Portrait photograph (photographer Teodor Szajnok, 1833-1894). Cyfrowe Archiwum Galerii Fotografii Miasta Rzeszowa, [GFK-9-51](#). By kind permission of the Rzeszów City Photography Gallery ([archiwum.gfmr.pl](#))



Fig. 3. Teodozja Papara. Freulein Theodosia Edle von Papara[,s] Fortepiano Schule... Lemberg Stadt [Lviv]: Theodosia von Papara, 1856. NLS shelfmark: [Mus.C.I.170](#).

Research into the provenance is still ongoing. Physical evidence on the item includes the gold tooled inscription on the outer front cover „Für Ihre k.k. Hoheit Erzherzogin Sophie” which provides evidence for the connection to the Austrian imperial court. On the inside there is an imperial monogram (with a library / shelfmark tag) which has been identified as Sisi’s. The keyboard was donated to the National Library of Scotland in 1978 and accessioned in April that year. While a record of a likely donation exists in an internal finding aid the actual donation form has not yet surfaced. But how did this item find its way to Scotland?

It appears only parts of the imperial library were transferred to the Austrian National Library with some material going to Sisi's surviving daughters. There are still living descendants who may know more about what happened to archival and library material from the 19th century imperial library. Further research into the family history and historic sales of Sisi items may eventually help trace and result in a more complete provenance history of this amazing collection item. Anyone who may be able to help with this is invited to contact the music curator, Almut Boehme, a.boehme@nls.uk.

Almut Boehme (Music Curator, National Library of Scotland)

Provenance of the *Lust-hoofken* printed by Jan Amelisz in 1621



Fig. 1. Utrecht University Library, Z oct 2775 (Rariora)

In 1621, a remarkable booklet in oblong format was published by the Utrecht publisher Jan Amelisz van Paddenburg: *Het Lust-hoofken* ('the little garden of pleasure') by the Dutch poet Jan Jansz Starter (1594-1626). Amelisz printed this work in his printing house *Het Vergulde ABC* ('the gilded ABC'). Jan Starter was very dissatisfied with this printing, calling it „Soo snooden voddery” ('a dirty mess') and accusing Jan Amelisz of copy theft. Starter had his own texts printed by the Amsterdam printer Paulus van Ravesteyn that same year under the title *Friesche Lusthof* ('Frisian garden of pleasure').

The *Friesche Lusthof* became a great success for the 27-year-old Jan Starter, but he was unable to enjoy it for long: he died shortly afterwards, during a campaign during the Dutch Eighty Years' War. Amelisz Jansz van Paddenburg (1600-1671), son of Jan Amelisz, also reprinted the *Friesche Lusthof* twice, in 1626 and 1628.

Only one copy of the *Lust-hoofken* has survived in the Netherlands, in the collection of the library of Utrecht University. The only other known copy is in the library of the University of Wrocław in Poland.

The Utrecht copy features an ex libris at the front with a coat of arms and the initials C.W.G.V.N. This ex libris has also been found in other books, such as in *Beschryvinghe vande voyagie om den geheelen werelddoot* by Olivier van Noort (1602) in the collection of the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam. These initials stand for Christoph Wenzel, Graf (count) von Nostitz-Rieneck (1643-1712).



Fig. 2. Portrait of Jan Starter in *Lust-hoofken* (1621).



Fig. 3. Utrecht University Library, Z oct 2775 (Rariora).



Fig. 4. Book by Olivier van Noort (1602). Maritime Museum Rotterdam, WAE 2 A 31

His father Baron Otto Wenzel von Nostitz (1608–1664), who served as administrator in Breslau, had amassed an extensive book collection at Lobris Castle in Jauer, in the former Silesia. At present-day Pałac Luboradz in Poland, the Nostitz coat of arms which is also depicted in the ex libris engraving, can still be seen on a remnant of a statue.



Fig. 5. Former Lobris Castle in Jauer, now Pałac Luboradz in Poland.



Fig. 6. Remnant of the statue with the coat of arms at the Pałac Luboradz

After Baron Otto's death, the castle and the book collection passed to his son, Christoph. After six generations, the last male heir was Count Jozef von Nostitz-Rieneck (1821-1890). After his death, his daughters Marie and Ernestine sold the book collection through the antiquarian bookshop Ludwig Rosenthal at Hildegardstrasse 16 in Munich. The auction catalog of April 22, 1895, lists 1915 items, including both a copy of the *Lust-hoofken* (item 737) by Jan Amelisz and the *Friesche Lusthof* (item 738) by Paulus van Ravesteyn.

The Hague antiquarian bookshop W.P. van Stockum & Son purchased several works at the auction. On May 16, 1895, three printed works were resold to the Utrecht University Library. The journal of Utrecht University library indicates that 30 guilders were paid for the *Lust-hoofken*. The Dutch Royal Library also purchased printed works from this auction via the Hague antiquarian bookshop.

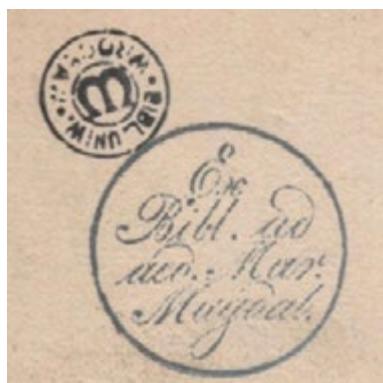


Fig. 6. Stamps of the Maria Magdalena Church library and the Wrocław University library.

The only other known copy of the *Lust-hoofken* is located approximately sixty kilometers from the Silesian family castle of Lobris, in the collection of the University of Wrocław. This copy does not contain an ex libris by Christoph von Nostitz, but another printed work does. Along with three other printed works, they derive from the Nostitz collection. Provenance research has shown that these other four Nostitz books originated from Schweidnitz Monastery (present-day Świdnica, Poland), thirty kilometers from Lobris Castle in Jauer.

The stamp in the *Lust-hoofken* copy in Wrocław however, indicates that this copy originated from the library of the Church of Maria Magdalena in Breslau (present-day Wrocław) and reached the Wrocław University collection via the Stadtbibliothek Breslau.

Peter Nieuwenhuizen (Leiden University & Utrecht University, NL)

Literature

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Bibliothek Lobris (1895), *Münchener Bücher-Auktion 22. April 1895. Katalog der reichhaltigen Bibliothek des gräflichen Schlosses Lobris bei Jauer i/Schlesien und anderer Sammlungen*. München, p. 76.

Nieuwenhuizen, P. (2020), 'Soo snooden voddery' van Jan Amelisz - Het *Lust-hoofken* van Jan Starter'. In: *Boekenwereld* 36 (1), p. 44-49.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Diana Lancucka (information specialist at the Wrocław University Library), Frits de Goojer (Utrecht University Library) and Edith Rosenthal (Ludwig Rosenthal's Antiquarian Bookshop in Leidschendam).

Provenance in the Italian library of Kathleen Butler (1883-1950) of Cambridge

Increased student teaching with early Italian collections at Cambridge University Library (CUL) in the last year brought to our attention a portion of the working library of the Cambridge linguist Kathleen Butler (1883-1950). This came to CUL in 1951, partly by purchase and partly through presentation by Girton's Vice-Mistress and Librarian Helena McMorran. Other books (primarily French) were left by Butler to her colleague Henriette Bibas and remain at Girton.

Butler read Medieval & Modern Languages at Girton and was the college's Director of Studies in Modern Languages from 1915, University Lecturer in Italian from 1926 (when University lectureships were opened to women) and Mistress of Girton (1942-49). She was instrumental in the negotiations that led the University to grant full membership to women in 1948 and by all accounts was a powerful force:

She soon became known among her new colleagues as Blazing Butler, the redhead whose impatience with bureaucracy and rigid rules was liable to boil over at staff meetings: a tendency which her professionalism and sense of duty tamed over the years, making her an excellent and restrained chairman. (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography)

The 150 or so books which make up Butler's collection remain together, distinguished by her bookplate. This carries a quotation from Book 4 of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, speaking of drinking from new springs and plucking flowers. The majority of the books date to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; most are Italian but the works of Balzac (on whom Butler published) are well represented. Many retain contemporary vellum bindings, and patterned endpapers are in profusion. There is a good selection of books by and about women, including a literary memorial (Padua, 1686) to the Venetian philosopher Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646-84), the first woman to receive a PhD. Many books carry significant pre-Butler provenance, and among the more interesting is a 1561 Venetian edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which bears the inscription of W. W. Greg, Librarian of Trinity College Cambridge and President of The Bibliographical Society; the works of Tommaso Garzoni (Venice, 1616) owned by the historian of Venice Horatio Forbes Brown; a work by Polydore Vergil (Florence, 1592) with the bookplate of the great eighteenth-century collector Joseph Smith (British Consul at Venice); and the letters of Cardinal Bentivoglio (Rome, 1654) inscribed by the Rev. J. D. Williams to the poet Robert Browning in 1888, who wrote to Williams (28 March) with thanks:

The 'Letters' happen to be the first book I read when learning Italian in my youth. I had but a Selection: this ... contains that remarkable account of the poor cardinal's death, caused by the tremendous snoring of a too adjacent Eminenza, his companion in the Conclave [to elect a successor to Pope Urban VIII]. (T. J. Collins & W. J. Pickering, 'Letters from Robert Browning to the Rev. J. D. Williams', *Browning Institute Studies* 4 (1976), p. 51).

None of this provenance is yet recorded in CUL's online catalogue (an oversight soon to be remedied) and we look forward in the coming year to sharing more of Butler's library with students and researchers in Cambridge and further afield.

Liam Sims (Cambridge University Library)



Provenances of the Livonian Knighthood Library

The Library of the National Archives of Latvia in Riga holds more than 2000 volumes of early prints that once belonged to the historical book collection of the Livonian Knighthood (German: Livländische Ritterschaft). The Livonian Knighthood was a self-governing organization of noble Baltic Germans of Livonia, who, after the provisions of the Vilnius Treaty of 1561, became the bearers of the international rights of the Duchy of Livonia.

In the 17th century, along with the formation of the knighthood's archive, a book collection was created. Materials were stored in the historical houses of the knighthood in Riga, where over the centuries the library was actively developed, the collection being available to representatives of the knighthood and scholars.

After the establishment of the independent states of Latvia and Estonia in 1918, the Livonian Knighthood lost its political status. During the 1920s, its book collection and archival materials became an object of considerable interest, and its division evolved into a dynamic and complex process, whereby portions of the collection entered the ownership of both institutional and private holders, and a considerable part of the collection was transferred to Germany. While the manuscripts were located in the Latvian State Historical Archives, the early printed books are today preserved in several repositories, including the National Library of Latvia; however, the largest corpus remaining in Latvia is held by the Library of the National Archives. In 2022, the Library of the National Archives initiated the scientific research and electronic cataloguing of those volumes printed between 1506 and 1830. It became evident that this previously unresearched collection includes both bibliographical rarities and copies with distinctive and noteworthy provenance.



In accordance with the purpose of this specific library – to serve members of the knighthood and scholars – the core of the collection that has survived to the present day is largely dominated by texts devoted to Livonia and regions of particular relevance to it: Baltica, Curlandica, Danica, Suetica, Polonica, Russica, with the extensive Prussica having to be especially highlighted. These texts address military and cultural history, politics,

legislation, economics, heraldry, biographies of monarchs, lexicography, architecture, numismatics, ethnography, palaeography, genealogy, and practical manuals in various fields, e.g. cultivation of crops. It is notable that works of theology, philosophy, and belles-lettres are represented to a much lesser extent.

The books' provenances are numerous and compelling, mostly significant within the context of Livonian cultural history. Among the former owners of these books were the Riga City Council, prominent Baltic German noblemen, clergy, officials, scholars, as well as members of the knighthood itself. At the same time, ex libris from European private libraries and individuals have also been identified (e.g., EX BIBLIOTHECA ROSENBERGIANA; Ex libris C. G Heraei; EX BIBLIOTHECA CAROLI ERNESTI RAMSEY, Praeconsul Elbing; E BIBLIOTHECA WOOGIANA;

Ex bibliotheca Windhaagiana; Ex libris C. B. Lengnichii; Ex Bibliotheca Ecclesiae Cathedralis Varmiensis; Radziwiłł Library of Nesvizh Castle; personalised binding of Heinrich Rantzau and his wife Christina von Halle). In addition, provenances of institutions have been identified: those of the Jesuit colleges of Orsha, Mogilev, and Vitebsk, the Minsk Spiritual Consistory, and the Mogilev Theological Seminary among others.





As a substantial part of the historical collection of the Livonian Knighthood Library was transferred to Germany, it can be assumed that its copies are now dispersed among European repositories of early printed books. These volumes can be identified by an ex libris bearing the coat of arms of the Livonian knighthood and the inscription Bibliothek der Livländischen Ritterschaft in Riga (large: 13×8.5 cm; small: 8.7×6 cm), as well as by four types of stamps with the name BIBLIOTHEK DER LIVLÄNDISCHEN RITTERSCHAFT (with and without the coat of arms), Bibliothek der Livländischen Ritterschaft zu Riga 18[...] Acc. Nr.[...], and BIBL. DER LIVL. R.

The National Archives of Latvia have already begun digitising those volumes for which no digital copies are available elsewhere, as well as the unique copies. Its library is open not only to members of the knighthood and scholars as it was in previous centuries, but to all users for whom its collection may be of interest.

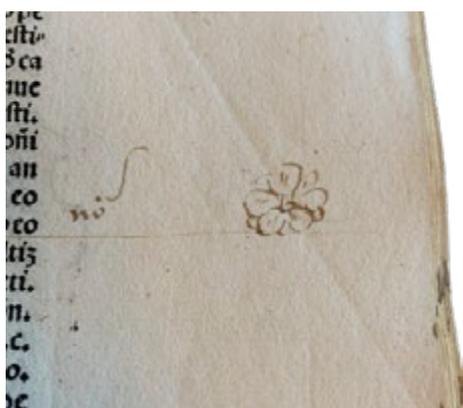
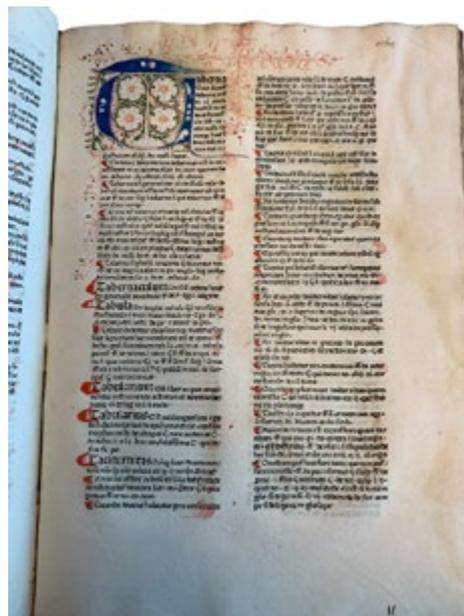
Renāte Berga (National Archives of Latvia)

Internships and fellowships

A MEI-Internship at the Special Collections of Utrecht University Library

On the fifth of February 2025, I started my internship at the Special Collections department at Utrecht University Library. Under the guidance and supervision of Bettina the Klerk-Heyder, cataloguer at the Special Collections, I began a learning trajectory that would last until the 10th of April. During these two and a half months I devoted all my attention to gaining experience and insight into the delicate workings of an organization as considerable as the University Library. The vessel through which I could do so was the Material Evidence in Incunabula project.

Before the development of MEI in 2013 by the University of Oxford, it was far from guaranteed that provenance information of fifteenth-century books would be included in general library catalogues. Hence the need for a database that would focus on and collect the material aspects and evidence of the use of these incunabula. As an intern I was to contribute to this database by meticulously analyzing, collecting, and entering data on the material evidence of the incunabula from Utrecht's Chapter of St. Martin (1220-1811) into the MEI database. In the end, 28 copies were newly added to the database, 16 of which were from the Chapter of St. Martin.



While the work, at first glance, seemed to be quite systematic and regular, it soon proved to be an assignment filled with thought-provoking deviations and particularities. On the first day, for example, my supervisor and I came upon a rare instance where copy L fol 784 (Rariora) lacked the label signifying that it had been catalogued with all incunables in the early 20th century, a forgotten book, so to speak. Such peculiarities occurred more often as there were beautiful instances in which the incunabula had retained their original binding, or intriguing occasions where some notes on the endleaves revealed new information on the possible timeframe of a provenance. Significantly, however, it became clear that some incunabula had anomalies that could not be connected to the chapter of St. Martin after all. Such cases created an exciting search for the

true provenances, leading from one end of the building to another in search of the right catalogues and accession journals. Cases such as these attest to the versatile and intellectually stimulating nature of the task and the material at hand.

In February 2025 the Utrecht University Library started re-cataloguing and digitizing all of its incunabula (in total ca. 900 titles). The MEI descriptions form a valuable source of extra information informing these processes, showing how well my internship fitted within the current work being done at the Special Collections department. In the final stages of my internship, Dennis Sies, Library technician, was kind enough to explain and guide me through the Special Collection's digitalization process with its pre-processing, scan-operating, and post-processing stages. As a result, I have become comfortable in such an intricate organization as the University Library in Utrecht. By working on the MEI project my knowledge of book science and my skills in related matters of terminology, paleography, and contributing to databases have developed significantly. Not only was I granted the privilege of working with these age-old and fragile materials, but I also had the opportunity to meet many practicing experts, join meetings, and have a first taste of what working life is like. In conclusion, my time as an intern at the Special Collections department of the Utrecht University Library was a unique and formative experience that included a great deal of valuable instruction and sincere enjoyment. I am very grateful to the entire Special Collections team and Bettina especially for the pleasant work environment and consistent guidance.

Phébe Hoek

The program *Courants du monde – Parcours de collections 2025* in Bibliothèque nationale de France

In 1992, the French Ministry of Culture established the *Courants du monde* program to host foreign cultural professionals with the aim of encouraging professional exchange between France and other countries. Since its establishment, the program has welcomed more than 3,500 professionals from around the world. The initiative seeks to promote collaboration among cultural practitioners, disseminate French cultural policies, and build lasting international partnerships. This framework has continued to evolve, notably with the introduction of the *Parcours de collections* program in 2022 which aims to initiate and develop joint studies on the provenance research of certain objects and collections held in France.

From 1 to 30 September 2025, I carried out a research project at the National Library of France* as part of the program *Courants du monde – Parcours de collections 2025*. The aim of this project entitled *Les provenances des livres polonais („polonica”) imprimées aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles dans les collections de la Bibliothèque nationale de France* was to identify the provenance of books printed in Poland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that are held in the collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, as well as to determine the nature of Franco-Polish relations in the early modern period through an analysis of traces of their origin and their integration into French collections. The project was based on the collections held in the Réserve des livres rares, and four other departments: Droit, économie, politique, philosophie; Histoire; Sciences de l’homme; Littérature et art; et Sciences et techniques, as well as in the Richelieu library collection.

From a bibliographical perspective, the most remarkable discoveries concern two Polish works printed in the sixteenth century that are preserved in unique copies. The first, *Modlitwy ojców świętych*, was published in Polish in Kraków in 1577 by the Arian printer Maciej Wirzbięta. It is preserved in its original binding, characteristic of the period, featuring a typical Jagiellonian roll tool associated with Kraków bindings. Formerly owned by an individual named Jakob Feszer, the work was transferred to the National Library of France in the nineteenth century. The second example is the *Dictionarius* by Jan Murmelius, published in 1572 by Stanisław Szarfenberger, also in Kraków. Initially held at the Library of the Fathers of Christian Doctrine in Paris, it was transferred to the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in the post-Revolutionary period.

The project resulted in the compilation of a short provenance catalogue of works printed in Poland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which included bibliographical description, general description of the copy, provenance description and book binding description. Analysis of provenance marks and material transfers made it possible to distinguish four main categories: works incorporated into the Royal Library as early as the seventeenth century, those acquired in the eighteenth century, post-Revolutionary acquisitions, and collections integrated after 1848. The results reveal the existence of networks of intellectual and cultural exchange between France and Poland. The volumes originated both from French collectors, such as Étienne Baluze, Pierre-Daniel Huet, Jacques Quétif, and Camille Falconet, and from influential Polish figures, including the Duke of Pomerania Bogusław X, the Radziwiłł magnates, and Józef Andrzej Załuski. These transfers, whether in the form of gifts, bequests, or private acquisitions, show the circulation of ideas and knowledge across borders. The study highlights the central role of the Royal Library in the formation of the Polish holdings, contradicting the first hypothesis that the majority of these printed works entered the collections in the nineteenth century during waves of Polish emigration. On the contrary, archival evidence and provenance marks attest to active exchanges as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reflecting diplomatic, cultural, and scientific interactions between the two countries.



Exchange residencies under the *Courants du monde* program last between one and three months, with participants selected through an annual recruitment process, usually held around September.

Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła (Ossolineum National Library)

** Acknowledgements: I wish to convey my sincere thanks to the entire team of the Bibliothèque nationale de France for the exceptionally professional and warm reception, their kindness, and the enriching exchanges throughout my residency.*

The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation Fellowship: The Bildarchiv of the Prussian State Library



The recent rediscovery of the photographic archive of the Manuscript Department of the Prussian State Library (Bildarchiv) sheds new light on – and opens new avenues for research into – the holdings of this former Berlin institution that are today preserved

in Poland. This reference collection, formed during the interwar period and consisting of approximately 30,000 standardized photographs, primarily documents German illuminated manuscripts from the holdings of the Prussian State Library, as well as manuscripts from other libraries, private collections, and items circulating on the antiquarian market in Germany and abroad. Secured in 1944 at Fischbach Castle (Lower Silesia), the Bildarchiv subsequently found its way, under unknown circumstances, to the National Museum in Warsaw in the aftermath of the war. There, for the next half century, it functioned as an unofficial photographic archive for the curator of the museum's medieval art gallery and was known to and extensively used by only a small circle of Polish medieval art historians.

Within the framework of a fellowship generously awarded in 2025 by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation at the State Library in Berlin, I was able to recontextualize the Bildarchiv and to investigate its origins, history, meanings, and uses with a view to a future book publication. Research conducted with the assistance of, and in close collaboration with, the librarians and scholars of the Library led to the identification of previously little-known and understudied aspects of the Prussian State Library's history and activities, as well as of manuscript research and preservation practices during the interwar period. In particular, I was able to reconstruct the history and activities of the Library's photographic workshop, established in 1914 within the Manuscript Department; to reassess key national and international research and library networks formed around the Bildarchiv; to juxtapose this archive with other reproduction collections of the Manuscript Department (including negatives, facsimiles, and codices simulati); and to examine the impact of the Bildarchiv on preservation and research practices in other libraries in Germany and abroad. By focusing on a largely forgotten reference collection of the Prussian State Library and reconnecting it to its original institutional and scholarly context, my case study proposes a broader approach to provenance research, framed as a chain of a manuscript's discovery, study, and valorization, inscribed with the names of the scholars, collections, and libraries that constitute its provenance history. The Bildarchiv was recently transferred to the holdings of the Jagiellonian Library, where it has the potential to serve as a tangible link between past and present: between the ambitious and visionary research projects once conducted on the former Berlin collections at the Prussian State Library and those pursued today at the Jagiellonian Library.

Ewa Manikowska (Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Contact: ewa.manikowska@ispan.pl

Tiny, mighty, precious, rare: provenance as part of a book's opportunity to shine

In 2025 the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation celebrated 30 years of continuous contribution to education, culture, and maritime heritage in Greece. To mark this milestone, a series of events was organized to celebrate and reflect on the Foundation's multifaceted work from its establishment to the present day. As part of these anniversary activities, the Historical Library presented a temporary exhibition of old and rare printed books from its collections, aptly titled *30 Years, 30 Books. Tiny, mighty, precious, rare*, which aimed to showcase some of the finest examples from the Library's holdings, with particular emphasis on the materiality of the book and on provenance as a key element of its historical and scholarly significance.

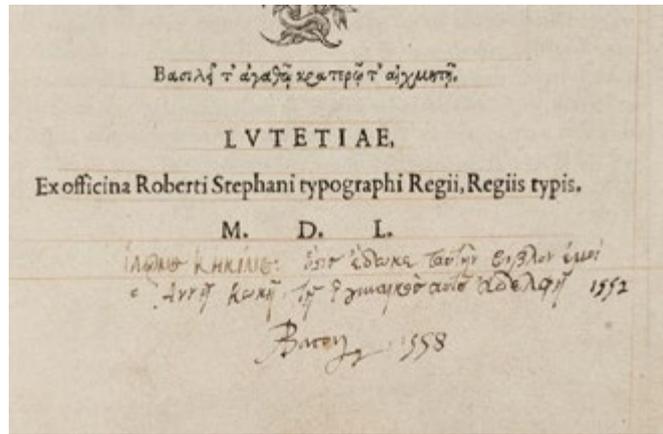


The selected exhibits date back as far as the incunabula period and often preserve features inherited from the manuscript tradition, such as hand-made decoration or illustration, added either at the time of publication or later in the book's life. A telling example is the Library's copy of the *editio princeps* of Sophocles, printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice in 1502, which bears colourful hand-made decoration at the opening of each play, attesting to early reader intervention and use.

Among the most informative types of provenance evidence are ownership inscriptions, particularly when they can be associated with identifiable or



well-known individuals. In the Library's copy of Robert Estienne's outstanding 1550 edition of the New Testament, the first to include a critical apparatus, an early inscription records the name of a female owner, Anne Cooke. Later Lady Anne Bacon, and mother of the philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, Cooke was a scholar in her own right. Her Greek inscription, dated 1558, offers rare insight into learned female book ownership in the sixteenth century.



Books preserving multiple layers of provenance are especially revealing. An example that stands out comes from an exceptionally rare copy of *Against Jews* by Kyrillos Loukaris, Patriarch of Constantinople (Constantinople, Nicodemus Metaxas, 1627), produced as part of his effort to establish a Greek-language printing press in Istanbul. This volume preserves a remarkable sequence of provenance marks: a fragment of a Greek manuscript reused as binder's waste on the front pastedown; the booklabel of the collector Spyridon Loverdos placed over it; and, on the title page, an earlier ownership inscription by a Greek priest, including a theft-discouraging curse.



Particular attention was given to provenance in otherwise unremarkable books, through two posters: one dedicated to ex libris, from early examples to modern designs, and another focused on modern inscriptions, featuring signed and dedicated copies by prominent modern Greek authors and poets. Together, they underline that rarity and collectability are not exclusive to old books.



Through these examples, the exhibition demonstrates how provenance, whether discreet or striking, can illuminate the complex and layered histories of books, inviting scholars, collectors, readers, and the wider public to engage more deeply with them as historical artefacts with lived lives.

The exhibition will be open to the public until June 2026. Place: Historical Library, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, 2nd Merarchias St, Piraeus, Greece.

For more information see [here](#).

Kleopatra Kyrtata (Curator of Old and Rare materials, Historical Library, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation)

Provenance Workshop

In February 2025, the Houghton Library at Harvard University held the Spring 2025 Medieval Studies Workshop entitled “An Introduction to Provenance Research on Early Manuscripts and Books,” during which participants were introduced to the principles of provenance research through the study of Harvard’s manuscripts and early printed books.

The workshop was led by Bill Stoneman.



International Provenance Day 2025

More than 100 cultural institutions from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States participated in the International Provenance Research Day 2025, held on 10 April. The international initiative showcased the diversity and relevance of contemporary provenance research through a wide range of public events.

Libraries, museums, archives, and research institutions offered lectures, workshops, guided walks, and exhibitions, providing insight into the investigation of the origins, ownership histories, and displacement of cultural assets.



Photo© Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e. V.

In Berlin, ten cultural institutions jointly organized #tracesearch, a program of five guided provenance walks across the city. The walks offered the public direct insight into the work of provenance researchers and the historical layers embedded in Berlin's cultural landscape. Participating institutions included the Academy of Arts, Berlinische Galerie, the German Historical Museum (DHM), the Ethnological Museum of the National Museums in Berlin, the Jewish Museum Berlin, the State Library of Berlin, the Topography of Terror Foundation, the University Library of the Humboldt University of Berlin, the Central Archive of the National Museums in Berlin, and the Central and Regional Library of Berlin.

The Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation contributed with a workshop examining how artificial intelligence and AI-based image similarity searches can support provenance research and help identify previously unknown connections between cultural objects.

The SLUB Dresden prepared the exhibition *Fateful Pages: Books by Persecuted Lawyers in the SLUB Dresden* which is available [online](#).

All initiatives can be consulted [here](#).

Zidanku Manuscript Repatriation



Photo©Xinhua/Hu Yousong

In May 2025, the [Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art](#) repatriated fragments of the Zidanku Silk Manuscripts (fourth–third century BCE) to the People's Republic of China. Regarded as the earliest known silk writings and the oldest classical Chinese book in the strict sense, the manuscripts are often referred to as the Chinese Version of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Recent provenance research - most notably by the Chinese historian Li Ling - has reconstructed their journey from illicit tomb looting during World War II through multiple intermediaries to museums and foundations in the United States.

The Chinese State Council Information Office has characterized this return as [the most important cultural repatriation in China's history to date](#).

CERL Provenance Working Group Seminars

In 2025, the CERL Provenance Working Group organized two online book seminars, held in June and November. The first seminar explored historic book collections of European origin now held outside Europe. Speakers included dr Agnieszka Rec (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale, USA) talking on the provenance and development of incunabula collections at the Beinecke Library, dr Noël Golvers (KU Leuven), who discussed early modern Jesuit book collections in Beijing, and dr Isabel Cervantes and dr Silvia Salgado Ruelas (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Biblioteca Nacional de México), who presented their research on the books of the English ship Westmorland in Mexico.

The second seminar focused on cataloguing provenance in the Alma system, with presentations by Marina Ruiz Fargas and Laia Navarro De Llobet (University of Barcelona, Rare Book and Manuscript CRAI Library) and Mira Krall (National Library of Austria).

Recordings of the talks are available [online](#).



V SEMINAR ON BOOK PROVENANCE
CERL Provenance Working Group
13th November 2025
Online
16:00 CET

16:00–16:30
Marta Ruiz Fargas, Laia Navarro de Llobet,
Universitat de Barcelona (Spain)
Cataloguing and disseminating provenance at
the University of Barcelona's Rare Book and
Manuscript CRAI Library

16:30–17:00
Mira Krall, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
Wien
Cataloguing provenance in the Alma
National Library's Department of Manuscripts
and Rare Books

17:00
Discussion

RBMS Controlled Vocabularies: Provenance markings terms

The RBMS Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group (CVEG) has been developing proposals to update and align terminology related to [provenance markings](#) in the Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging (CVRMC) and the RBMS Relationship Designators. The editorial group will be welcoming community feedback on these proposals through February 12, 2026, on the [CVEG blog](#).

CVEG oversees the creation and maintenance of controlled vocabularies for describing rare books, manuscripts, and special collections, operating within the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. This work traces back to 1979 proposals by the Independent Research Libraries Association advocating for standardized MARC terminology for physical characteristics such as provenance, later reflected in publications including *Provenance evidence : thesaurus for use in rare book and special collections cataloguing*.

Restitutions in Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin

In 2025, several books held by the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (ZLB) were restituted to institutions around Europe. Two books were returned to the Latvian Parliamentary Library. The volumes were identified as originating from the Library of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Saeimas bibliotēka), whose collections were looted during the German occupation of Latvia (1941–1944) and partly transferred to Germany as war plunder. Two further books originating from the Masonic lodges *La Liberté* in Ghent and *Les Vrais Amis de l'Union et du Progrès Réunis* in Brussels were restituted to the Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Maçonique – Maçonniek Studie- en Documentatiecentrum (CEDOM-MADOC). All Masonic property in Belgium was confiscated and seized by Nazi organizations from 1940 onwards. In October 2025, four books originating from pre-war religious institutions in Vilnius – the Catholic Boniface Monastery and the Church of the Ascension – were restituted to the Archdiocese of Vilnius. One further book, originating from the Protestant Apologetische Centrale in Berlin, was returned to the archive and library of the Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. The Apologetische Centrale was forcibly closed in 1937–1938, and its assets, including a library of around 2,000 volumes, were confiscated by the German Reich.



Photo ©ZLB

In addition, fourteen books and two bookplates formerly belonging to private owners – including Arnold Sack (1863-1940), Luise Zickel (1878-1942), Doris Gladnikoff (1914-1988), Henry Goldsmith (1915-2014), and the Auerbach family – were restituted. Over the years, the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin has successfully returned more than 1,232 objects in 215 individual restitution cases.

Restitution of books owned by Raoul Fernand Jellinek-Mercedes

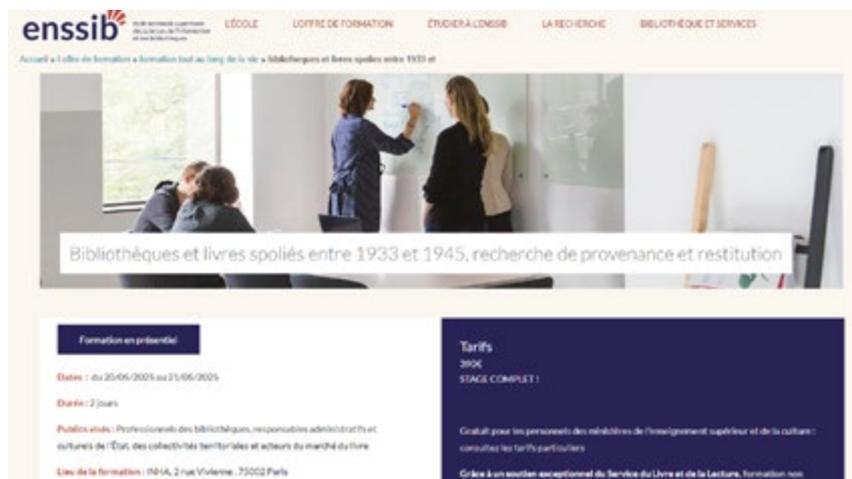
Fourteen German libraries and archives, including the Berlin State Library, have returned a total of 41 books belonging to the Austrian writer Raoul Fernand Jellinek-Mercedes (1888-1939) who possessed a large collection of musical scores, paintings, and books. Jellinek-Mercedes was persecuted after the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938 and his collection was dispersed. The 41 books identified in recent years as a result of ongoing provenance research were returned to the heirs of Jellinek-Mercedes., from whom they were subsequently repurchased for the library collections.



Photo ©Provenance Wiki

ENSSIB : Bibliothèques et livres spoliés entre 1933 et 1945, recherche de provenance et restitution, 20 et 21 mai 2025

In May 2025, the École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques (ENSSIB) organized a two-day training course dedicated to provenance research and the restitution of books and documents looted during the Nazi era, particularly from Jewish families. The programme was designed for library and book trade professionals, as well as administrative and cultural officials from state and local authorities. The event was supported by the French Ministry of Culture.



© ENSSIB

Restitution case in France

On 13 June 2025, the Bibliothèque nationale de France returned a book that had belonged to Liebmann Mayer (1885–1994), a Jewish German art historian and former chief curator of the Alte Pinakothek, which had been looted during the Second World War.

The book was restituted to his daughter following cooperation between the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the French Ministry of Culture, and the Holocaust Claims Processing Office of the State of New York. This restitution marks the first application of the French law of 22 July 2023, a landmark piece of legislation designed to facilitate the return of cultural property spoliated as a result of Nazi persecution, thereby paving the way for further restitutions.

The book had been seized in 1945 from the residence of Hermann Göring and was subsequently incorporated into the collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Photo © BnF

Creation of a research tool on restitutions in France in 1945–1962

Mission de recherche et de restitution des biens culturels spoliés entre 1933 et 1945

In 2025, the Mission de recherche et de restitution des biens culturels spoliés entre 1933 et 1945 (M2RS; Mission for Research and Restitution of Cultural Property Spoliated between 1933 and 1945), a department of the Secretariat-General of the French Ministry of Culture attached to the Legal and International Affairs Department, developed a restitution research tool in the form of an Excel file containing approximately 10,000 entries.

The file lists property restituted by the Commission for Artistic Recovery (CRA), the French post-war body responsible for identifying, recovering, and restituting cultural objects looted during the Second World War, and by the Office for Private Property and Interests (OBIP), which oversaw the restitution of a broader range of private property and financial interests. The data is based on restitution release forms preserved in the archives of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and made accessible via its website.

This tool enables users to determine whether an object was restituted, as well as the date and the recipient of the restitution. The dataset also includes books among the restituted items.

The exhibition *Collecting Ireland's History : Libraries and the Recovery of Lost Records*

In June 2025, the Library of the Royal Irish Academy launched *Collecting Ireland's History: Libraries and the Recovery of Lost Records*, an exhibition exploring 700 years of collecting Irish historical manuscripts and the shared role of private collectors and libraries in rebuilding a lost archive.

Developed in collaboration with the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (VRTI), the exhibition is curated by Sarah Hendriks, Research Fellow in Early Modern History and Archival Discovery and Library Network Lead at the VRTI.

A [digital exhibition](#) accompanies the physical display.



©RIA Library, VRTI

Creation of the Greater Poland Provenance Working Group

On June 13, 2025, the first regional conference *Wielkopolska Grupa Proweniencyjna – instytucje, zbiory, wyzwania* (*Greater Poland Provenance Group – Institutions, Collections, Challenges*) took place as part of the newly established Greater Poland Provenance Group (created in autumn 2024 as a regional counterpart to the Polish Provenance Group). The conference focused on presenting the holdings of libraries in the region and fostering acquaintance and integration among librarians from Greater Poland. The next steps will include workshops on provenance research for librarians from regional institutions in January and February 2026, followed by another conference in June 2026, this time hosted by the Regional Museum in Leszno.



Photo by J. Błoch



Photo © SPSPG

The exhibition *Die Prinzessinnenbibliothek. Sofia Albertina von Schweden und ihre Bücher*

From 8 July to 5 October 2025, an exhibition at Rheinsberg Palace presented, for the first time, books from the private library of Princess Sofia Albertina of Sweden (1753-1829). Organized by the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg (Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, SPSPG) in cooperation with the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz), the exhibition showcased 116 items from a collection of around 4,500 volumes acquired in 2017 with the support of the Rudolf August Oetker Foundation and the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States.

Exceptionally well preserved and largely complete, the library offers a rare insight into women's education and Enlightenment reading culture, with works on education, languages, theatre, art, architecture, and fashion.

The exhibition *Hidden – Discovered: Books from the Jesuit Church in the Ukrainian Vasyl Stefanyk Library in Lviv*

On July 11, 2025, the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, Poland, opened the exhibition *Hidden – Discovered: Books from the Jesuit Church in the Vasyl Stefanyk Library in Lviv*, prepared in cooperation with the Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. Held under the patronage of the Consul General of Ukraine in Wrocław, the exhibition presents 19th- and early 20th-century publications from institutional, monastic, and private collections of Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish, German, and Armenian communities that lived in the Lviv region in the 1930s–1940s. Long stored in the former Jesuit Church of Sts Peter and Paul in Lviv, these books remained inaccessible to scholars and the public until 2011.

The exhibition was curated by Dr Margaryta Kryvenko (Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv) and Dr Dorota Sidorowicz-Mulak (Ossoliński National Institute).

The exhibition was accompanied by a trilingual catalogue published in English, Polish, and Ukrainian.



Photo ©Ossolineum

Update on the Theft of Rare Russian Books from European Libraries

In June 2025, Georgian national Mikhail Z. was convicted in Lithuania and sentenced to three years and four months in prison for stealing 17 rare nineteenth-century Russian books worth over €600,000 from the Vilnius University Library in May 2023.

The case forms part of a wider series of thefts across Europe, in which at least 170 Russian books were stolen from libraries in Finland, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, and France. Investigators, coordinated through the International Investigative Team “Pushkin”, identified an international criminal network.

In September 2025, Mikhail Z. also confessed to stealing rare books from the University of Warsaw Library and provided a detailed account of his methods, admitting that he acted on commission for a Russian buyer who resold the books in Russia, including through auctions at the Litfond Auction House. Additional suspects have been detained in Georgia, and seized books are currently under examination as recovery efforts continue.

See [more information](#).



Photo by Wojtek Radwański/AFP/Getty Images.

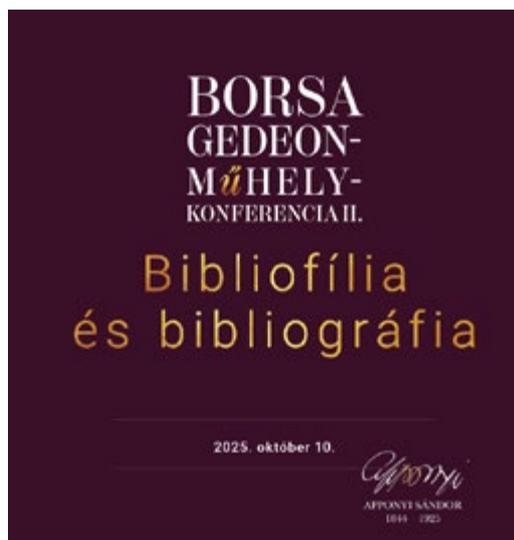
Cooperation between Humboldt University and Poznań University on Grimm books

On September 23, 2025, Prof. Eliza Pieciul-Karmińska (Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures, Adam Mickiewicz University) and staff of the University Library in Poznań organized a meeting and a presentation of selected volumes from the Grimm Brothers' collection for "Grimmologists" from Kassel (Prof. H. Ehrhardt, Dr. S. Lang, P. Kraut, Prof. H. Nischiguchi). The guests were accompanied by Dr. Yong-Mi Rauch (Head of Special Collections at the Humboldt University Library), with whom discussions on potential institutional cooperation were held. She was also shown part of the Leopold Hirschberg collection (prior to 1945 in the holdings of UB Berlin). The meeting proved highly fruitful, and plans were outlined for future collaboration between Berlin and Poznań aimed at identifying books of Berlin provenance within Poznań's collections, originating from libraries of, among others, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Hirschberg, and Charles Marie Marelle. Initial organizational steps have already been taken.



Photo by J. Błoch.

The conference *Bibliofília és bibliográfia* in Budapest



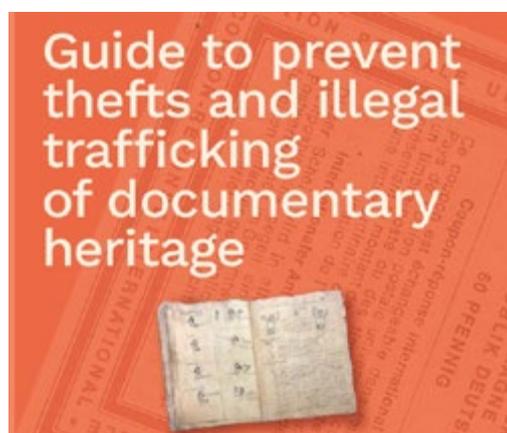
©OSZK

On 10 October 2025, the National Széchényi Library hosted the second Borsa Gedeon Workshop Conference: *Bibliophilia and Bibliography*. Building on a series launched in 2024, the event focused on the legacy of the Hungarian bibliophile Sándor Apponyi, marking the centenary of his death, and also commemorated bibliographer Géza Petrik.

The conference brought together librarians, archivists, and scholars to present new research on historical book collecting, provenance evidence, and the formation and afterlife of private libraries. Through case studies drawn largely from Apponyi's collection, speakers examined among others ownership marks, bindings, acquisition networks, and the movement of books from private collections into public institutions.

In 2025, the Expert Group against Theft, Trafficking and Tampering (EGATTT) published a guide to preventing theft and illicit trafficking of documentary heritage which offers practical advice on prevention, risk management, and responding to crimes involving documentary materials.

The EGATTT Guide to Prevent Thefts and Illegal Trafficking of Documentary Heritage can be consulted [here](#).



Colloquium in Uppsala

From October 15–17, 2025, the colloquium *The Jesuit Library of Poznań: A Story of Survival and Resilience* was held in Uppsala, marking the completion of the search and cataloging of books looted from Poznań during the Swedish Deluge in the mid-17th century, which are now preserved in the collections of Uppsala University Library. This is the first step toward a virtual reconstruction of the Jesuit College library in Poznań.

To date, 2,500 books have been identified in Uppsala, approximately 400 volumes in the University Library in Poznań, as well as individual copies scattered across Polish and foreign libraries.



Photo by C. Calma

The Exhibition *Bibliophile Peeter Tulviste*



Author: Maarja Roosi

©Tartu University

In October 2025, the University of Tartu Library inaugurated the exhibition *Bibliophile Peeter Tulviste*, presenting a selection of books from the personal collection of Peeter Tulviste (1945–2017), an Estonian psychologist, politician, professor, and former rector of the University of Tartu. Regarded as one of the most wide-ranging book collectors in both Tartu and Estonia at large, Tulviste's intellectual curiosity and passion for books come vividly to life through this exhibition.

Curated by Tõnu Kollo, the exhibition will remain open to visitors until March 14, 2026.

The exhibition *Maria Carolina, una regina nel suo mondo di carta. Libri, spartiti, documenti*

In December 2025, the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli opened an exhibition dedicated to the book collection of Maria Carolina of Habsburg. Comprising approximately 7,000 volumes and largely preserved in the library's holdings, the collection is presented through a curated selection of books alongside archival documents, fine bindings, musical scores, and the queen's rotating reading desk, offering insight into her rich cultural world.

An accompanying catalogue is available [online](#).

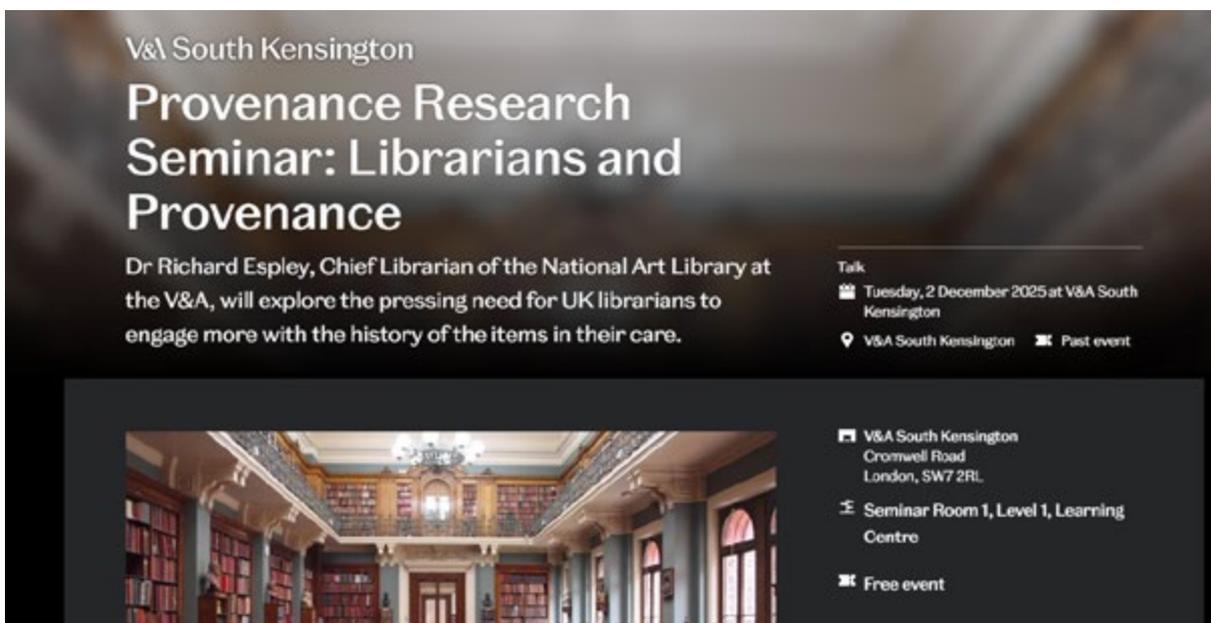
The exhibition runs until 6 February 2026.



©Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli

Provenance Research on Books and Printed Materials at the Victoria and Albert Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) has been undertaking sustained provenance research across its collections, with growing attention to books and printed materials held by the National Art Library. Research priorities include materials acquired during the colonial period and the years surrounding the Nazi regime (1933–1945).



V&A South Kensington

Provenance Research Seminar: Librarians and Provenance

Dr Richard Espley, Chief Librarian of the National Art Library at the V&A, will explore the pressing need for UK librarians to engage more with the history of the items in their care.

Talk
📅 Tuesday, 2 December 2025 at V&A South Kensington
📍 V&A South Kensington 🗳️ Past event

📍 V&A South Kensington
Cromwell Road
London, SW7 2RL
🏠 Seminar Room 1, Level 1, Learning Centre
🗳️ Free event

The V&A disseminates its findings through open-access collection records, research publications, and a series of Provenance Research Seminars. These have included sessions dedicated to book provenance research, such as *Librarians and Provenance* (December 2025), delivered by Dr Richard Espley, Chief Librarian of the National Art Library at the V&A, which examined the pressing need for UK librarians to engage more closely with the ownership histories of the materials in their care. This work is further advanced through scholarly events, including the forthcoming conference *Bibliomigrancy amongst the Ruins: post-1945 Book Movement* (16–17 April 2026), which will examine the circulation of books after 1945 and forms part of an ongoing initiative to investigate the provenance of the National Art Library's collections at the V&A.

The ILAB Provenance Guide



In December 2025, the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers published the first edition of the [ILAB Provenance Guide](#), prepared in consultation with its national member associations and IFLA Rare Books and Special Collections Section. Intended to support ILAB members in navigating provenance research, this working document contains useful practical information on book provenance such as key considerations for booksellers and a practical checklist for provenance research and resources including stolen and illicit goods databases.

The document will be updated periodically.

Upcoming Events 2026

- **Call for participation: *Provenance Research Day 2026***

Where: international

When: 8 April 2026

Organizer: Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e.V.

Coordinator: Arbeitsgruppe Tag der Provenienzforschung

Participants: all institutions conducting provenance research

Applications: register your event [here](#).

This year, the Provenance Research Day will take place on April 8th. All institutions involved in provenance research are invited to participate in this event, joining the global research community. Contributions may take the form of talks, lectures, discussions, workshops, exhibitions, book presentations etc.

[More information](#)

- **Call for blog posts: *RETOUR Freier Blog für Provenienzforschende***

On the occasion of Provenance Research Day on April 9, 2025, the editorial team of *Retour Free blog for provenance researchers* is accepting texts on provenance research, working experience, interesting objects etc. relating to book provenance to be published on the blog [website](#).

The blog operates in cooperation with the German Provenance Working Group Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung und Restitution – Bibliotheken (“Working Group Provenance Research and Restitution – Libraries”).

Text requirements: 1,500 to 5,000 characters (1/2 to two A4 pages)

Applications: by March 27, 2026, to retour@disroot.org

[More information](#)

- **Conference: *Bibliomigrancy amongst the Ruins: post-1945 Book Movement***

The conference on the movement of books after 1945, addressing themes such as state-led efforts to assemble books outside their pre-1945 contexts, postwar library construction by governmental or military authorities, case studies of individual booksellers and collectors, role of antiquarian book dealers and auction houses, as well as varying degrees of informed complicity in the circulation of seized or stolen books. The conference is a part of an ongoing initiative to investigate the provenance of the National Art Library’s collections at the V&A.

When: 16-17 April 2026

Where: V&A Research Institute, National Art Library and Archives

Applications: closed.

For more information, please visit the [website](#).

- **Conference: *Libraries and Collectors: A Symposium Celebrating the Centenary of the Gennadius Library***

When: 21-22 April 2026

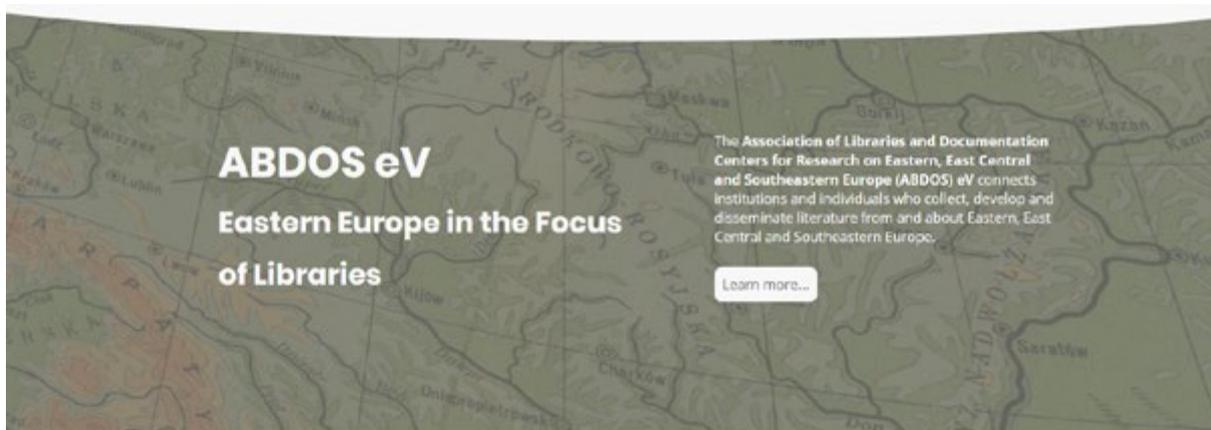
Where: Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens

Applications: closed.

The conference on the evolution of private collecting into public knowledge institutions, the history of printing and systems of knowledge organisation, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by openness in the digital era. The full conference programme will be available in early 2026.

The conference will be organized as part of the CERL Spring Meetings which will take place on 20–21 April 2026 at the Gennadius Library.

- **Conference: *Bibliotheken und Exil: Bücher, Leser, Geschichten***



The conference explores how libraries, archives, and documentation address exile and emigration - including provenance questions - as reflected in collections, research, journalism, literature, and metadata practices.

When: 11-13 May, 2026

Where: Slovanská knihovna in Prague, ABDOS (Association of Libraries and Documentation Centers for Research on Eastern, East Central and Southeastern Europe)

Conference fee: €110 (ABDOS members) / €160 (non-members) / €500 (commercial providers)

Languages: English, German

Applications: by February 28, 2026

For more information, please visit the [website](#).

- **Conference: *The (Un)forgotten Viennese. Conference on the 200th Anniversary of the Death of Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński***

The Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, the Austrian National Library in Vienna, the Polish Institute in Vienna, the Polish Academy of Sciences in Vienna and the Universities of Wrocław and Vienna invite you to participate in the international conference on the Polish book collector Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński (1754-1826) and private collecting in general, to be held in Vienna on 18-19 June, 2026.



When: June 18-19, 2025

Where: Austrian National Library and the Polish Institute in Vienna

Conference fee: none. For participants with a paper the organisers provide accommodation (2 nights), limited refunds for travel expenses are possible.

Languages: English, German, Polish

Applications:

- with a paper: by February 15, 2026, to: ossolinski.conference@ossolineum.pl and had-slg@onb.ac.at
- without a paper: by May 31, 2026 (limited number of places, applications will be processed chronologically)

For more information, please visit the [website](#).

• **Course:** *Zertifikatskurs BIBLIOTHEKARISCHE PROVENIENZFORSCHUNG*

When:

- Module 1: 23-24 March 2026
- Module 2: 27-28 April 2026
- Module 3: 8-9 June 2026

Where:

- Module 1: Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Weimar
- Module 2: Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden
- Module 3: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig

Format: in person

Organizer: Freie Universität Berlin

Fee: 420,- € (or one module: 195,- €)

Applications: by February 6, 2026

Language: German

With support from the German Lost Art Foundation, the Continuing Education Center of Freie Universität Berlin is offering for the fourth time its certificate program in library provenance research. The in-person, three-module course combines historical and methodological instruction with practical training, focusing on collections affected by Nazi persecution, the Soviet Occupation Zone and GDR, and colonial contexts. It is organized in cooperation with the Provenance Research Commission of the German Library Association and partner libraries in Dresden, Leipzig, and Weimar.

[More information](#)

• **Course:** *Biens culturels spoliés entre 1933 et 1945 : recherche de provenance, restitution, valorisation et médiation*

When: 25-27 March, 2026

Where: Paris

Format: in person

Organizer: L'Institut national du patrimoine

Fee: 960,- €

Language: French

The training course addresses the methods of provenance research and restitution of cultural property looted from Jewish families during the Nazi era, as well as the responsibilities related to their public presentation. The programme is aimed at museum professionals, public officials, archivists, librarians, book market professionals, cultural property managers.

[More information](#)

• **Course:** *Provenance: Tracing Owners & Collections*

Lecturer: David Pearson

When: 31 May-5 June 2026 (30 hours)

Where: University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA

Format: in person

Organizer: Rare Book School, University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA

Fee: \$1,495

Applications: by 17 February 2026

In-person course focusing on recognizing and deciphering various forms of ownership markings, tracing owners and their books, and understanding the value of this information.

Topics: inscriptions, paleography, bookplates, heraldry, bindings as provenance evidence, sale catalogues, tracing owners, and the recording of provenance data in catalogues.

Recipients: anyone who regularly works with early books (librarians, collectors, dealers) and who would like to improve their knowledge in this area.

The course is part of [Rare Book School 2026](#).

[More information](#)

• **Course:** *Provenance in Books*

Lecturer: David Pearson

When: 22-26 June 2026

Where: Senate House, Institute of English Studies, University of London

Format: in person

Organizer: London Rare Book School (LRBS), Institute of English Studies, University of London

Fee: £675 (student/unwaged: £520)

Applications: by 31 May 2026

A summer school course on identifying and interpreting the various kinds of provenance evidence found in books before 1900. The course will include learning about different types of ownership marks, as well as practical sessions on palaeography and reference sources. Teaching is complemented by hands-on exercises and opportunities to examine examples drawn from the Senate House collections. The course is part of [2026 London Rare Books School](#).

[More information](#)

- **Course:** *Fakes, Forgeries and Stolen Books*

Lecturer: dr Joseph Hone

When: 22-26 June 2026

Where: Senate House, Institute of English Studies, University of London

Format: in person

Organizer: London Rare Book School (LRBS), Institute of English Studies, University of London

Fee: £675 (student/unwaged: £520)

Applications: by 31 May 2026

A summer school course on book forgeries, covering topics ranging from false imprints and counterfeit editions to the falsification of provenance. The course will include identifying fakes, as well as historical overview of their production from the early modern period to the present day. Participants will acquire practical, hands-on experience through the examination of forged and stolen books held in the Senate House collections and other relevant repositories. The course is part of [2026 London Rare Books School](#).

[More information](#)

- **Exhibition:** *Houdini's Library*

Where: Harry Ransom Center, the University of Texas at Austin

When: August 29, 2026 – January 25, 2027

Curator: dr Eric Colleary

An exhibition on the life and collecting practices of Harry Houdini featuring books, manuscripts, and ephemera, from a first edition of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) to the travel diary of David Garrick. The exhibition marks the centenary of Houdini's death in 1926.

New Books

- *Hans Sloane's library collection and the production of knowledge* / Alice Wickenden, Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2025. – 264 pp. – ISBN 9781009497398.

A scholarly study of the library of Hans Sloane's (1660-1753) which became a founding collection of the British Library and the British Museum. The book explores the history and organization of Sloan's collection to show how it functioned as a tool for producing, organizing, and shaping knowledge in the early modern period.

- *The Relentless Pursuit of Rare Books : Further Essays and Escapades* / Kurt W Zimmerman, [Houston, Texas] : Book Hunters Club of Houston, 2025. – iv, 220 pp. – ISBN 9798992813210.

A collection of essays, written in an engaging style, that recount adventures in the hunt for rare books. Through first-hand accounts of his own book-hunting adventures and historical essays, the author shows the community of rare book collectors, antiquarian booksellers, librarians, bibliographers, auctioneers, and even occasional book thieves and forgers.

- *Defragmentierung von Wissensräumen. Die Rekonstruktion von Kloster- und Ordensbibliotheken* / Herausgegeben von Annelen Ottermann, (Bibliothek und Wissenschaft 57), Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz Verlag, 2025. - XV, 350 pp, 66 ill., 1 tabl. - ISBN: 978-3-447-18331-4.

A collection of papers examining dispersed monastic libraries in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland, tracing the development and expansion of their collections, as well as their virtual reconstruction.

- *Vědecké ratolesti v českých knihovnách : katalog výstavy : Státní zámek Kynžvart 4.7.- 5.9.2025* / Richard Šípek, Zdeněk Mužík (eds.), Praha: Národní muzeum, 2025. - 185 pp. - ISBN 978-80-7036-857-2.

A catalogue of the provenance exhibition *Vědecké ratolesti v českých knihovnách* (Budding Scholars in Czech Libraries), showcasing books from the private libraries of early modern scholars now held in Czech libraries.

- *Pieter de Graeff (1638–1707) and his treffelyke bibliotheek : Exploring and Reconstructing an Early Modern Private Library as a Book Collection and as a Physical Space* / Chiara Piccoli, Leiden : Brill Academic Publishers, 2025. - xxv, 275 pp. - ISBN: 978-90-04-70666-8.

A monograph examining the private collection known as the so-called “beautiful library” (treffelyke bibliotheek) of the patrician Pieter de Graeff (1638–1707), a member of a prominent Dutch regent family.

- ‘All my books in foreign tongues’ : The Oriental Bequest of Joseph Scaliger and the University Library of Leiden / Kasper van Ommen, Leiden : Brill Academic Publishers, 2025. - xviii, 362 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-70151-9.

A scholarly study examining the book and manuscript collection in “foreign tongues” bequeathed by the celebrated humanist Joseph Scaliger to the library of Leiden University, offering new insights into his scholarly networks, the rise of Oriental philology, the early modern book trade, and the development of cataloguing and library practices in the early modern period.

- *Knigozbirnja Karoliny Ljanc'korons'koj u fondu Naukovoï biblioteki Lviv'skoho uniwersytetu = The Library of Karolina Lanckorońska in the Scientific Library Collection of the University of Lviv*, Lviv : Lviv'skyj nacional'nyj universytet imeni Ivana Franka / ed. by Lesja Kupyn, 2025. – 160 pp., ill. - ISBN 978-617-10-0910-3.

A scholarly study of the private library of Karolina Lanckorońska (1898-2002), Polish art historian, recently rediscovered in the collection of the Lviv University Library in Ukraine. The study examines the history and fate of the library, analyzes its contents, and includes the catalogue providing detailed descriptions of the identified volumes.

- *The auction catalog of Isaac Beeckman's library (1637), on the occasion of the quadricentennial of the molecular theory* / Henk Kubbinga, Groningen : Groningen University Press, 2025. - XXIII, 216 pp. - ISBN 978-90-832231-1-7.

A study of the auction catalogue of the library of Isaac Beeckman (1588–1637), Dutch philosopher and scientist. The volume reproduces the original catalogue, identifies the listed works, and includes approximately 70 reproduced title pages, alongside a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Beeckman's library.

- *Maria Carolina, una regina nel suo mondo di carta. Libri, spartiti, documenti : Catalogo della mostra (Napoli, BNN 4 dicembre 2025 - 6 febbraio 2026) / a cura di Marcello Andria, Giulio Brevetti, Concetta Damiani, Paola Zito, Teverola* : Luciano Editore, 2025. - 158 pp. - ISBN 978-88-6026-382-7.

A catalogue of the exhibition on the private library of Maria Carolina of Habsburg, organised by the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli and held from 4 December 2025 to 6 February 2026.

- *Korona i księgi : woluminy z księgozbiorów królewskich w 1000-lecie pierwszej koronacji / P. Pokora, in cooperation with A. Wajnert, Poznań* : Biblioteka Raczyńskich : Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne : Fundacja TRES, 2025. - 263 pp. - ISBN 978-83-974260-0-9, 978-83-67305-55-6, ISBN978-83-931546-9-2.

A scholarly publication describing books from the collections of Polish kings and queens exhibited in the "Korona i księgi" exhibition at the Raczyński Library in 2025, complemented by essays on the fate of the Polish regalia and the history of royal libraries in Poland.

- *Haben wollen! : 20 Jahre NS-Provenienzforschung an den Bibliotheken, Archiven und Sammlungen der Universität Wien / ed. M. Stumpf, Göttingen* : V&R unipress, 2025. - 552 pp. - ISBN: 9783737019309, 9783847119302.

A collective monograph presenting studies on Nazi-era provenance research in Austrian libraries and archives, published to mark the 20th anniversary of such research at the Vienna University Library, the first Austrian university library to systematically review its holdings and acquisition policies in relation to National Socialism.

- *The library of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzār : book culture in late Ottoman Palestine / ed. S. Aljoumani, G. Burak, K. Hirschler, Leiden* : Brill Academic Publishers, [2025]. - XIII, 626 pp. - ISBN 9789004720527, 9789004720534.

A study on the library of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzār (d. 1804), governor of northern Palestine, based on its inventory, with a first volume providing historical and analytical context and a second volume presenting a facsimile, critical edition, and index of the inventory.

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