Fingers in Pies: CERL and European collaboration

Marian Lefferts, Executive Manager
Currently 250 members
London, 23 June 2015
Can You Help?

identifying provenance evidence

Most Recent Queries

Rocca (?) coat of arms
Are these the arms of a member of the Rocca family?

Italian book stamp
Can anyone id this Italian book stamp?

Partially unidentified coat-of-arms or arms
Can anyone identify the particular member of the family?

Circular armorial bookplate, 69/70 mm
Can anyone identify this circular armorial bookplate?

Stuart Royal Binding Stamp
Further information is sought about this royal binding

PROVENANCE

London, 23 June 2015
With permission from University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections
Sp Coll Bl7-e.2
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The idea that underpins the project is to use the material evidence from thousands of surviving books, as well as unique documentary evidence - the unpublished ledger of a Venetian bookseller in the 1480s - to address four fundamental objectives relating to the introduction of printing in the West which have so far eluded scholarship, partly because of the lack of effective tools to deal with existing evidence.

1. Distribution, Use, and Reading Practices

The book trade differs from other trades operating in the medieval and early modern periods in that the goods traded survive in considerable numbers. Not only do they survive, but many of them bear stratified evidence of their history in the form of marks of ownership, prices, manuscript annotations, binding and decoration styles. The database Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI), conceived by Cristina Dondi, developed by Alex Jahnke of Data Conversion Group, hosted and maintained by CERL, gathers together this kind of evidence for thousands of surviving 15th-c. printed books. For the first time, this makes it possible to track the circulation of books, their trade routes, national and international, and later collecting, across Europe and the USA, and throughout the centuries.

Former owners are identified as private or institutional, religious or lay, female or male, and by profession.

Marginal manuscript annotations are quantified - occasional, a few, several, throughout, extensive - and qualified: corrections, completions, supplements, extraction of key words, collation, translation, structuring the text, comments, censorship, reading marks, that is underlining and pointing, drawings, corrections/notes by the printer, lecture notes.

The Grant will enable a significant expansion and enhancement of the database Material Evidence in Incunabula, harvesting thousands of records presently scattered in hundreds of different libraries’ OPACs.

A postdoctoral researcher, based in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for 4 years, will be coordinating the expansion and enhancement its records, as well as working on TEXT-INC (see objective 3).

A postdoctoral researcher, based in Venice for 3 years, will be cataloguing the incunabula collections of the library, book in hand.

2. Books’ contemporary market value
CERL Annual Seminar

to be held at Universiteits-
bibliotheek Antwerpen,
27 October 2015
Thank you

www.cerl.org
marian.lefferts@cerl.org  (@MRL57)