Why are we gathering provenance data?

The historical framework

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Provenance research is interesting and useful. But interestingness and usefulness are not sufficient to make it sustainable in a competitive environment.
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research


David Pearson, *Books as History*, 2008
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

Authorship, presentation copies
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

History of private and institutional libraries
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

History of collecting & bibliophily
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

‘Provenance collections’
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

Preservation issues
2. A recent experience

¶ Tongerlo Abbey, Belgium
2. A recent experience

Catalogue of Tongerlo Abbey Library, 1625
2. A recent experience

Catalogue of Tongerlo Abbey Library, 1707
2. A recent experience

- heritage-oriented!
- no clear research questions!
- no underlying theory!
Interestingness and usefulness are not sufficient

- Cultural history: theoretical approaches
- Integration of research data
- International cooperation & crowdsourcing
3. Cultural history: theoretical approaches

Peter Burke, *What is cultural history?* 2004
3. Cultural history: theoretical approaches

- Conspicuous consumption
- Appropriation
- The cultures of collecting (incl. the canon of –)
- Emergence of concept of national heritage
- Dedications, patterns of patronage, network analysis
- Gender studies
- …
4. Integration of research data

Integration of *bibliographical* data and *copy-specific* information (e.g. Material Evidence in Incunabula)

But also combining *physical* evidence (provenance marks in specific copies) and *archival* evidence:

- library catalogues
- sales catalogues (auctions)
- probate inventories
- ...

4. Integration of research data
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Aubertus Miraeus, *Bibliothecae Antverpianae primordia*, Antwerp 1609
5. International cooperation & crowdsourcing

David Pearson, *Provenance research in bookhistory*, p. 2:

‘The whole notion of a one-country approach is out of place when considering a book trade which has always been international. The different methods of marking book ownership used by British collectors down the centuries have been mirrored or influenced by similar habits overseas, particularly in continental Europe.’
6. And finally...

CERL Seminar

Library history: why, what, how?

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