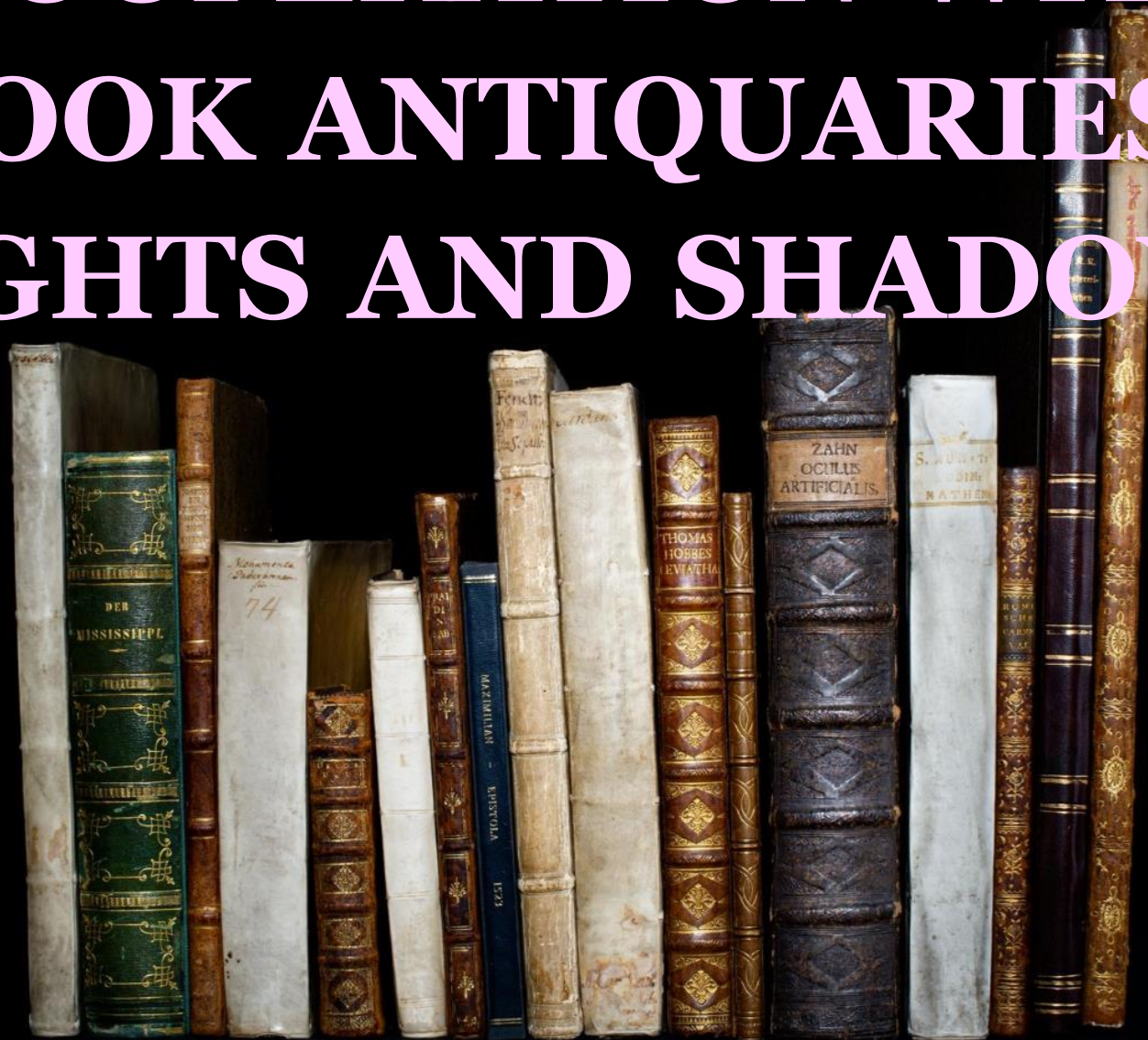


COOPERATION WITH BOOK ANTIQUARIES - LIGHTS AND SHADOWS





Background

A senior librarian stole at least 62 books during the years 1995-2004 and sold them at a German auctionhouse, he consigned them under fake identity, "Karl Fields"

"Mr. Fields" also consigned a further 43 stolen books from other Swedish libraries.





The total number of stolen books consigned by Mr.Fields:

43 (other libraries) +62 (The National library of Sweden) = **105 stolen books**

Lack of due diligence

- How was this possible at the auctionhouse?
- No attempts to establish Provenance
- The auctionhouse asked "no questions" even when confronted with erased ownership marks or cut title pages
- Paid in cash – no trace
- Trusted consignor at the previous owner of the auctionhouse. Inherited him as a trusted client.

Booksellers due diligence

- Booksellers lack of documentation such as receipts, pictures, transactions and descriptions
- Lack of Identity Checks
- Lack of cooperation with libraries when they try to locate and restitute stolen books
- Lack of provenance investigations



International
bookmarket

VS

National
Associations



According to ILAB
- Problems with
booksellers is a question
for the National
associations of Antiquaries

Bookmarket is global

Booksellers are promoted
as ILAB booksellers on
ILAB:s web

Oronce Fine worldmap, 1534, Bibliothèque
Nationale de France

BOOKSELLERS

ILAB - A Global Network

ILAB Booksellers

ILAB Congresses, Symposia & Presidents' Meetings

ILAB International Book Fairs

ILAB Code of Usages and Customs

ILAB History

Education & Mentoring for Booksellers

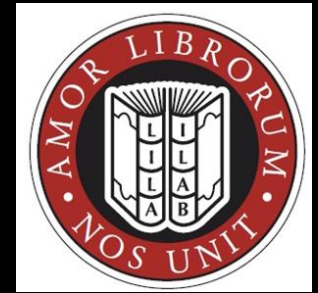
ILAB Committee

Contact



Over 1600 professional booksellers in 39 countries belong to the international network of ILAB.
But why buy books from an ILAB dealer?

ILAB:s Code of Usages and Customs



Stolen Property:

Members shall be responsible for passing to the buyer clear title to all material sold, and shall not knowingly purchase, hold or attempt to re-sell stolen material.

Due diligence practices include:

Knowing, or confirming, the identity of a vendor

Recording all purchases and taking reasonable steps to ensure the legitimacy of goods being offered.

In the event of books suspected of having been stolen, or having been proved to have been stolen, **it is the responsibility of the members to contact the original owner.**

They shall co-operate fully with law enforcement authorities to recover and return stolen material, and to apprehend those responsible.

Result of due diligence

62 stolen books from the National library of Sweden were bought by 32 booksellers.

24 of these booksellers are members of ILAB

A majority of these booksellers claim they don't remember when or where they sold the books or don't have any records.

Only 2 of these booksellers has cooperated fully and lived up to ILAB's Code of Usages and Customs.

Almost all of the booksellers claim "good faith" purchase which sounds contradictory when most of them have been professional booksellers for decades.

Two booksellers cooperated

They cooperated with law enforcement and the library

They have records from the purchase and descriptions and images of the books

They have contacted their buyers of the books

The National library feel that these two booksellers acted professionally and in line with ILAB's codes

Solutions??

Booksellers and Auctionhouses:

Regulate the book market! Make provenance records mandatory!

Follow the Codes of Usage & Customs

Be more careful during consignments of books

Ask questions when buying books with erased ownership, marks or cut title pages

More cooperation between libraries and the bookmarket

A professional bookseller should not be able to claim good faith purchase

SHADOWS

3 EXAMPLES

German bookseller – member of ILAB

Bought two of our stolen books from the German Auctionhouse, 1998



Borussia, Museum für Preussische Waterlandskunde, 1838

For sale in 2012

No records, no memory..... computer error

Probably sold in 2020 again at another member of
ILAB

Doesn't answer mails....

ILAB is informed....it's a matter for the National
association.

EXAMPLE 2

Bookseller in Europe

Has seen the list of stolen books

Member of ILAB and even president for a
National association



Sold this stolen book 2015

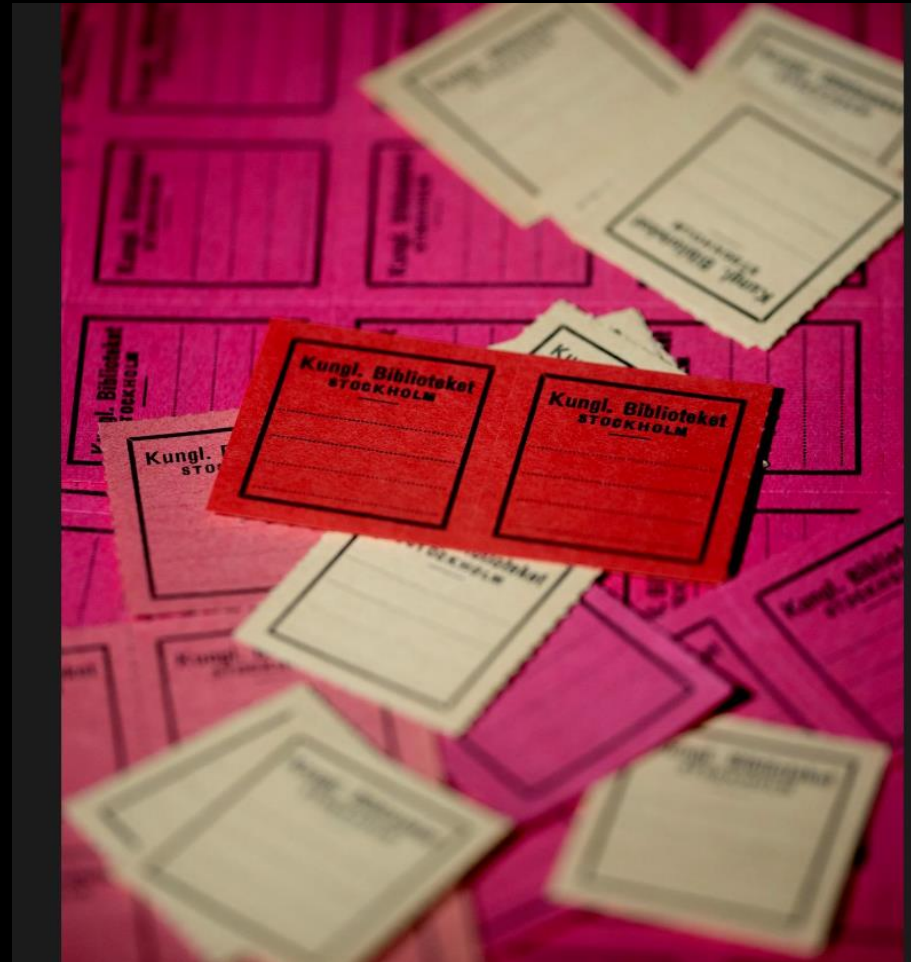
**Finally restituted to the National
library of Sweden in 2021!!**



EXAMPLE 3

Book stolen from the
conservator studio in
2000

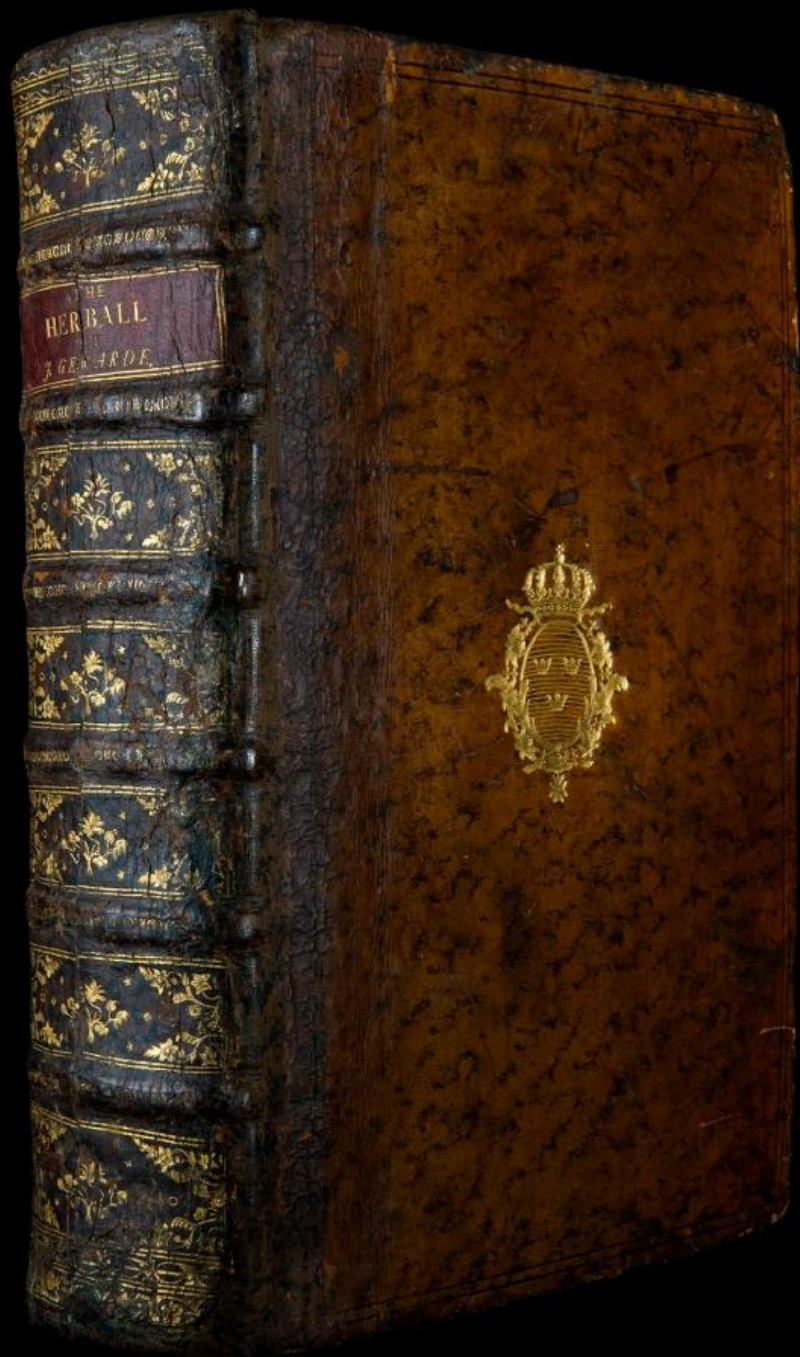
Exlibris and a dishcloth
on the floor

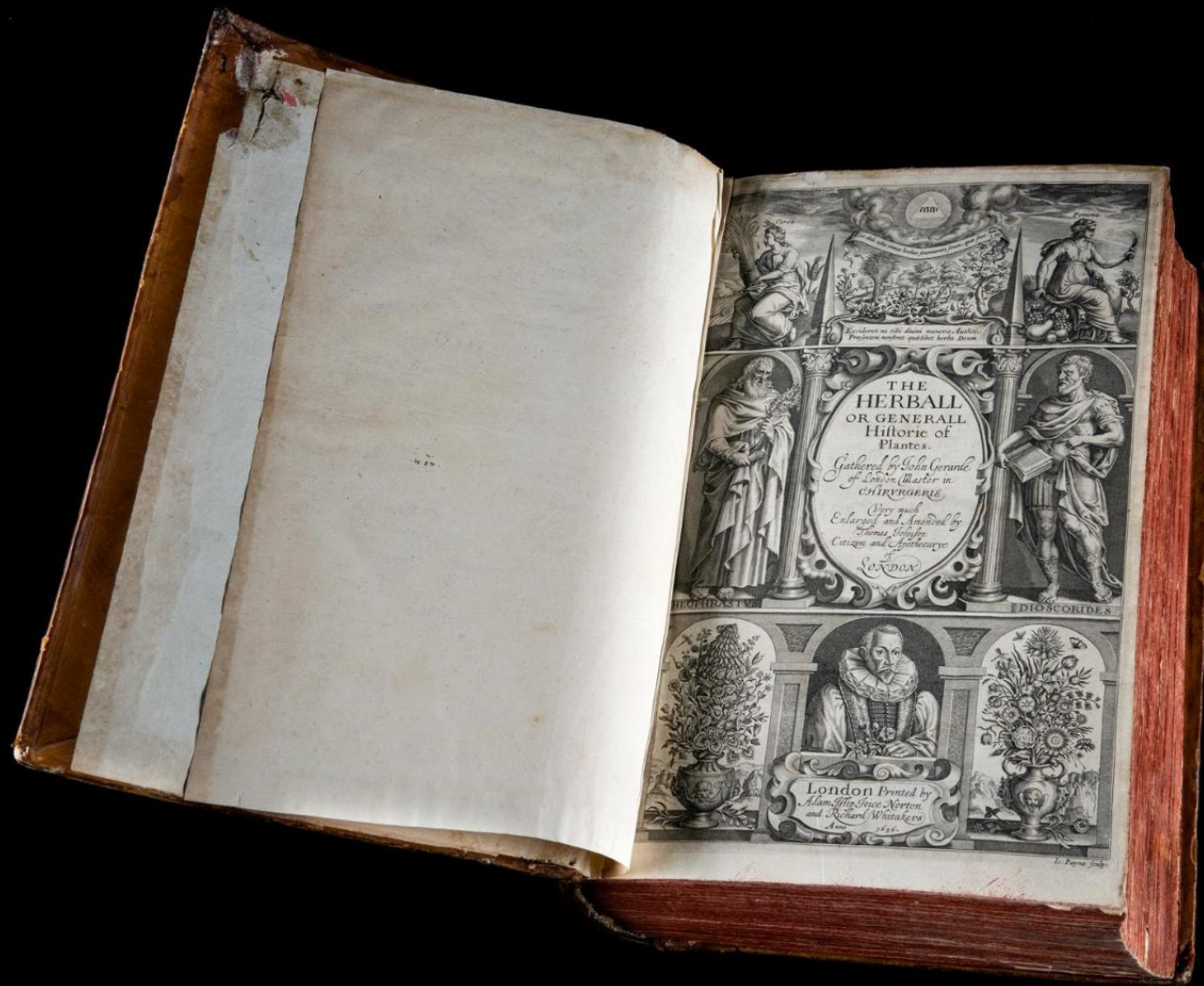


We bought a substitute copy in 2021

Bookseller told us....had sold a copy with royal stamp on the book cover!!

We had a conservators report from 1970's that described the bookcover with the royal stamp and a repair of the book cover.





Book was restituted 2023!!

What can we learn from these examples?

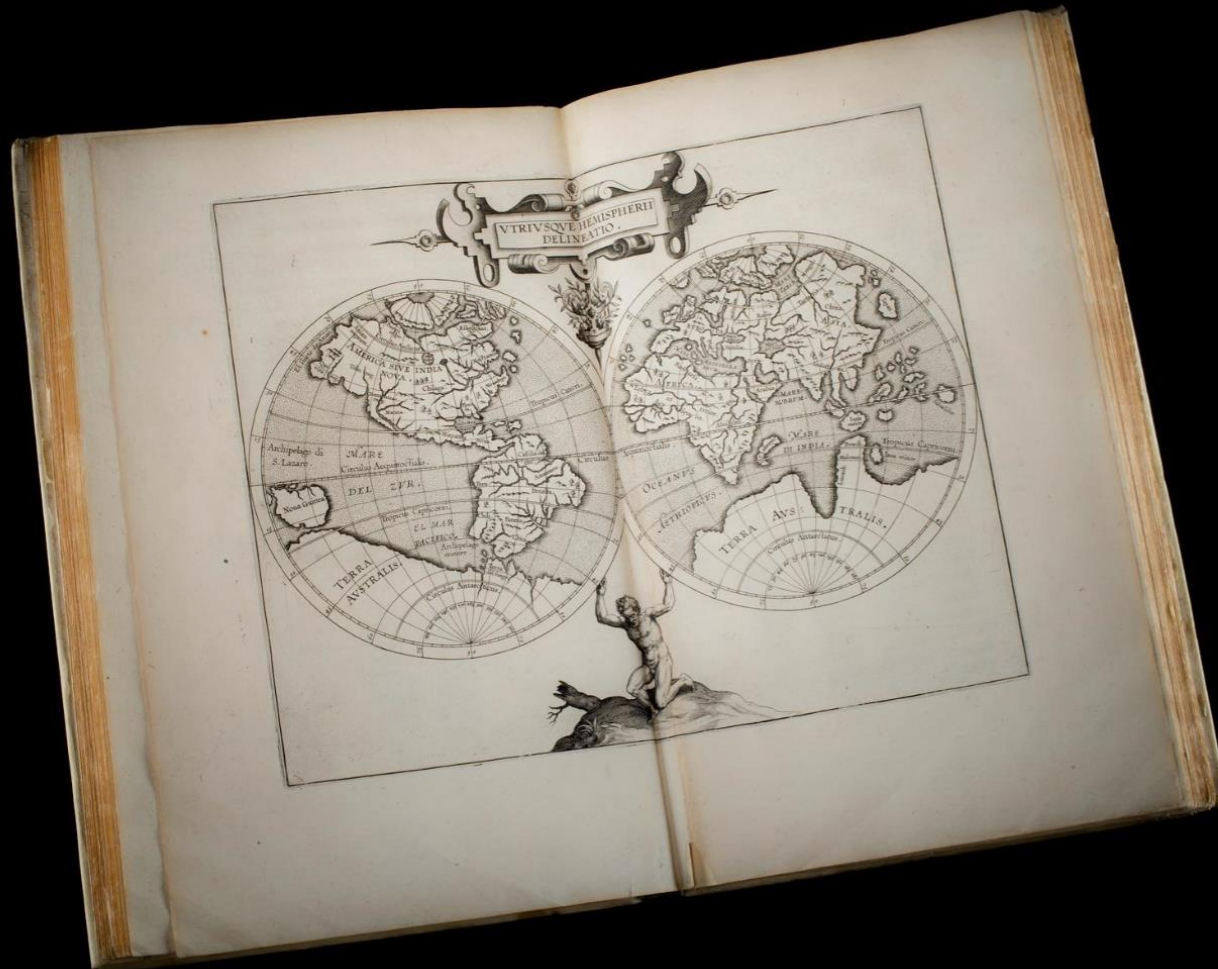
Act professional and friendly in contact with antiquaries and booksellers

Due diligence/code of ethics are good if they are followed!

Keep a good relation with the bookmarket

Different perspectives - Money vs cultural heritage

Thanks for listening!



Greger Bergvall

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