

Provenance Working Group

Within CERL a Provenance Working group is established. Members of this group are individuals involved in projects relating to the production of, and access to, records with provenance information, and their integration. The group has defined the following activities:

- developing standards for the description of provenance
- mapping vocabularies describing provenance
- mapping UNIMARC/MARC21 provenance fields
- supporting scholars' provenance research via the Can You Help? pages
- advising libraries that want to make their provenance records internationally accessible (via the CERL Thesaurus)
- inviting scholars to share their provenance research results via CERL services and its website
- maintaining the Online Provenance Resources webpages (<http://www.cerl.org/resources/provenance/geographical>)
- promoting further integration of provenance records into the CERL Thesaurus

Join the Working Group

If you share our interest in improving access to provenance information to support convenient scholarly use, you are warmly invited to join the CERL Provenance Working Group.

CERL Electronic Resources

The Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB)

The HPB offers scholars in all disciplines convenient and reliable access to over 5 million records of the European printed heritage from c. 1455 to c. 1830.

The CERL Thesaurus (CT)

The CERL Thesaurus contains forms of names for imprint places, persons and corporate bodies, printers and their devices, as well as provenance information.

The CERL Portal (CP)

The CERL Portal enables scholars to search across the contents of online manuscript databases, in combination with selected large databases of printed materials, thereby overcoming the historical differentiation of printed books and manuscripts in libraries.

Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)

MEI is a database for recording and searching the material evidence of 15th-century printed books: ownership, decoration, binding, manuscript annotations, stamps, prices, etc.

Can You Help? – Identifying Provenance Evidence

This is a resource for public discussion and identification of provenance queries. It allows the sharing of queries with an extensive network of specialists and the contribution of expertise.

Provenance at CERL

Accessing the record of Europe's book heritage

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Recently Solved Queries



Prince Lev Pavlovich Urusov (1839-1928)
Can anyone help identifying this russian bookplate?

identified by [Nazard](#), 2015-03-06



Melchior Bener of Schwäbisch Gmünd
Can you identify the surname in this inscription?

identified by [Klaus Graf](#), 2015-02-26



Marcel Desjardin
Identification sought.

identified by [John Bidwell](#), 2014-12-31



Johann von Münster (1560-1632)
Does anyone recognise this owner's mark?

identified by [Proveniensaarkæolog](#), 2014-12-16



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CERL and Provenance Information

Following the rise in research into the history of the book in the 1980s and 1990s, provenance studies have become an important ingredient in the work of social and cultural historians dealing with questions of readership and literacy. At the same time, increasing concern about the security of library collections has widened interest in recording provenances of all sorts, ancient and modern.

CERL provides an environment for this, for example, by stimulating the recording of provenance data for both manuscripts and books of the hand-press period. Moreover, it encourages the study of provenance as part of the history of the book, the history of libraries and the history of reading. Over the years, CERL has developed various tools and databases in the field of provenance research and, in addition, has added provenance data to existing CERL services. Most of these resources are freely available.

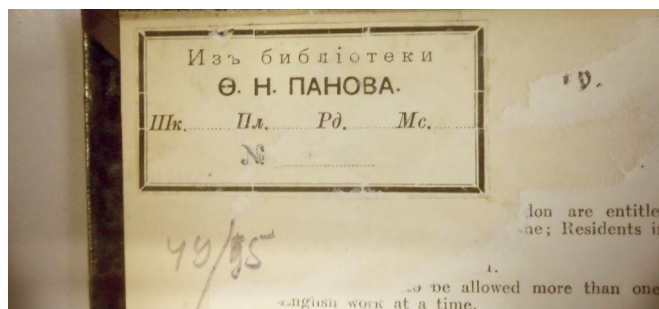
The Heritage of the Printed Book Database

The HPB Database records European printing of the hand-press period (c.1455 to c.1830). Increasing numbers of records in this database now record provenance information, and searching in the HPB is supported by specialist indexes such as [FMO] Former Owners, [FOC] Former Owners (Corporate Bodies), and [PRN] Provenance Names.

CERL Thesaurus

The CERL Thesaurus contains multi-lingual information on names of persons and places found in catalogues of books of the hand-press period. CERL has added a Provenance Names section to the CERL Thesaurus, in which former owners identified in MEI and via the Can You Help? pages, are also recorded.

Exlibris belonging to professor of law Fedor Nikolaevich Panov (1834-1915)



Dr Marieke van Delft (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands) is Chairman of the Provenance Working Group: *'By exploring who owned, used and read which books, research into the history of the book produces unique and important building blocks for the study of the spread of ideas and knowledge, and a detailed understanding of our shared history.'*

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Searching for Provenance Information?

Former Owners

Starting with a former owner's name you may retrieve the books owned by that person or corporate entity from library catalogues linked to the CERL Thesaurus.

Former Owners of Incunabula

Lookup former owners in P. Needham's *Index Possessorum Incunabulorum*.

Early Book Owners in Britain

Lookup British Bookowners and their books until ca. 1550 from *EBOB*.

Provenance of Incunabula

You may retrieve former owners and extensive descriptions of the copy specific evidence of 15th-century editions in the *Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)* database.

Identifying Provenance Evidence

If you would like help to identify a book plate, a binding stamp, a library label or stamp, or to read and identify an owner's inscription, you may search the *Can You Help - Identifying provenance evidence* database or post your own query there. You are also invited to help others with the identification of provenance evidence.

www.cerl.org/resources/provenance/main

Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)

MEI is a database specifically designed to record and search material aspects of 15th century printed books. Ownership and other provenance evidence such as bindings, manuscript annotations etc. are recorded in this database and made searchable. When a former owner of a book is identified the names are added to the CERL Thesaurus, and a link to the CERL Thesaurus is added to MEI.

Can You Help? – Identifying Provenance Evidence

CERL has developed a resource for publicising requests to help solve provenance queries. This database allows the sharing of queries with an extensive network of specialists. When the former owner of a book is identified the names are added to the CERL Thesaurus.

Other Provenance Resources

CERL hosts additional resources that were compiled by scholars. The first example is *Early Book Owners in Britain (EBOB)* created by Christie's Margaret Lane Ford when she was researching private ownership of printed books in the late 15th and 16th centuries. Another is Paul Needham's *Index Possessorum Incunabulorum (IPI)*. These resources are made available via CERL's general provenance page (and work is underway to integrate IPI into the CERL Thesaurus).

CERL website

CERL maintains a very rich list of provenance resources online available at European and North American institutions. Suggestions for further additions are very welcome.

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