

## CENDARI (cendari.eu)

CERL is a project partner in the CENDARI project (ends January 2016). The project aims to open up and integrate digital archives and resources for research on medieval and modern European history. It draws together resources to investigate the consciousness of place in medieval culture through the examination of texts – not only literary, but geographic, historiographical and lexicographic.

Tracing manuscripts, their cultural contexts and the places of their production, custody and dissemination, the project aims to build reliable hypotheses what impact cultural currents had, over time, on the various European geopolitical areas.

Project outcomes include:

- Archive Directory of medieval archival collections across regional and national boundaries
- Archival Research Guides acting as the connective tissues across archival collections with rich, contextualized information



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Einmündung des Apure  
und Krümmung des  
Oronoco Staatsbibliothek  
zu Berlin – Preußischer  
Kulturbesitz, Autogr. I/1809

## 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 CP 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.

# Manuscripts at CERL

Accessing the record of Europe's book heritage

# CONSORTIUM OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

## LIBER Forum for Digital Cultural Heritage

<http://libereurope.eu/digitalculturalheritageforum/>

CERL and LIBER collaborate closely in the 'Forum for Digital Cultural Heritage', with the Manuscript Librarians' Expert Group functioning as an important discussion partner. The Forum's purpose is to consider the interpretation of cultural heritage in an online environment of researchers and the general public. Topics of interest include digitisation, structured digital descriptions, 'born digital' materials as the cultural heritage of tomorrow, digital cultural heritage as primary research data for collaborative projects, and skills development. It also services as a space in which to exchange ideas, agree best practice, and provide professional encouragement and support.



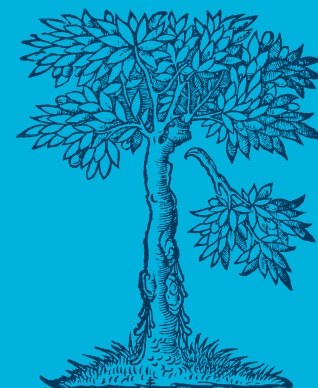
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# Manuscripts in Context

## Manuscript Librarians' Expert Group

The Manuscript Librarians' Expert Group has a long history. It was formed in 2001, after a conference in Stockholm in 2000, which was organised to discuss recent developments in the field and exchange information. The participating colleagues agreed to form an expert committee under the auspices of LIBER (Collection Development Division). In July 2001 LIBER's General Conference in London formally approved the Manuscript Librarians Group. After LIBER adopted a new strategic plan in 2012, the Expert Group became part of the CERL organisational structure.

## Aims

The Manuscript Librarians' Expert Group recognises the unique significance of manuscript and archive collections, not only for the world of research and learning, but also for a wider audience of people interested in history and cultural heritage. The primary aims of the Group are to act as a forum for curatorial concerns, and to enhance understanding and practical cooperation among curators across Europe, respecting the differences in approach which have occurred historically. Goals are to foster a dialogue with the academic community of users and to make our shared European handwritten heritage widely visible.

## Activities

Every other year, the Manuscript Librarians' Expert Group organises a large international conference where the latest developments in curation, enhancing the visibility of collections, large collaborative projects and current research are presented and discussed.

The presentations and other outcomes of all conferences are made available via the CERL website:

<http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/manuscriptexperts/>

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## CERL Portal for Manuscripts and Early Printed Material

The CERL Portal provides access to distributed databases containing descriptions of manuscripts, printed works, photographic material and other special materials.

The CERL Portal was set up to overcome the historical differentiation of printed books and manuscripts in libraries. So although the focus in the CERL Portal lies on manuscripts (from medieval to modern, and including archive collections), the Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB) and the English Short Title Catalogue can be included in the search as well.

The screenshot shows the CERL Portal interface. At the top, there's a search bar with fields for 'All words', 'Person', 'Title', 'Subject', 'Place', 'Shelfmark', and 'Year'. Below this is a table of databases categorized by 'Manuscripts, Archives, and Letters (1,750,000 records)' and 'Early Printed Material, 1450-1830 (8,000,000 records)'. The table lists various libraries and collections, such as the National Library of Portugal, BSB Munich, and the National Library of Australia. A callout box highlights that 1,400,000 records of autographs and 23,000 records of personal archives are available in 500 institutions in Germany.

With the full integration of the CERL Thesaurus (CT) to support search and retrieval, users need not enter all variant forms of names as separate search terms. They may retrieve a complete list from the CERL Thesaurus, and adopt all variants as search terms. Searches for publication places, personal names (authors, editors, translators etc.) and names from imprints (printers, publishers, booksellers etc.) can thus be expanded.

The CERL Portal has a multilingual interface covering eight languages.

Databases that are included are either 'harvested', i.e. the records have been collected from their original database and stored in an integrated, local index, or are accessed 'on the fly' – the records are collected through a live connection.

Links in the records lead the user to the manuscript descriptions held at the site of the contributing library, many of which often offer full digital copies of items in their collections.

The portal, which has been developed by the Electronic Publishing Centre of the University Library of Uppsala in Sweden (EPC), under the guidance of Ivan Boserup (KB Denmark, [nib@kb.dk](mailto:nib@kb.dk)), offers simultaneous searches in either all databases, or in a selection of one or more. Further databases are added as they are made available for harvesting or access 'on the fly', making this search portal a useful instrument for those researching manuscripts, archive collections and early printed materials, and where they overlap.

*The CERL Portal for Manuscripts and Early Printed Material may be accessed via <http://cerl.epc.uu.se/sportal/>*