

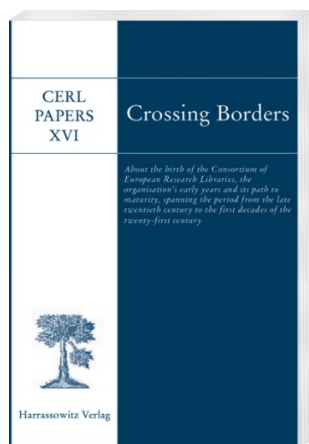
The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) is an international membership organisation that engages in promoting, sharing and developing the written heritage of Europe – books and manuscripts produced before the middle of the 19th century – represented by the collections of our members and beyond.

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## CERL Papers XVI – Crossing Borders

[https://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/Crossing\\_Borders/titel\\_9222.ahtml](https://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/Crossing_Borders/titel_9222.ahtml)



The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) was founded in the early 1990s, when borders were opening and the spirit of transnational cooperation was blossoming. It brought important European research libraries together in their endeavour to use data technology to share the contents of their historical collections.

In *Crossing Borders*, key people from the foundation years share their views on these beginnings: Dr. Lotte Hellinga, the first Secretary of CERL, Dr. Ann Matheson and Professor Dr. Elmar Mittler, the second and third Chairs, and Dr. Robert (Bob) Henderson on the beginnings of the Heritage of the Printed Book Database. Paperback and free downloads from the URL above.

## Communication Officer

<https://www.cerl.org/services/jobadvert2026>

CERL has a job opening for a Communication Officer (0,6 FTE initially for 24 months). This person will work with the management team of CERL to liaise with CERL Stakeholders, outlining the benefits of CERL membership, supporting our Working Groups and strengthening our role and profile in the field of international library organisations and academia. The application deadline is **30 June 2026**.



Communication Officer – 0.6 FTE

## New Special Members

### *Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Vilnius*



The origins of the library lie in the State Central Bookstore which was founded in Kaunas in 1919. The library was transferred to Vilnius in 1963, and after Lithuanian independence it received the status of National Library, named after the author of the first book in Lithuanian, Martynas Mažvydas. The library's manuscript collection contains the archives of many important 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuanian writers, scientists, artists and cultural activists. Particularly valuable collections are the parchment collection (151 parchments), a collection of incunables (90 items) and a

collection of documents from late 14<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century written in the Old Church Slavonic language. The library also holds an important Judaica collection, which includes publications on Lithuanian Jewish history in Yiddish and Hebrew.

### *University Library, Riga*

The history of the Libraries of the University of Latvia encompasses collections dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the 2024 merger with the Latvian Academic Library, which incorporated the Bibliotheca Rigensis—established in 1524 as one of Europe's earliest public libraries in the Baltic region, though much of its holdings were lost in World War II. Another gem of the Library of the University of Latvia is Misiņš Library – the earliest and most complete repository of Latvian literature, established in 1885 by the outstanding Latvian bibliographer Jānis Misiņš. It has served as a source of knowledge and inspiration for several generations of Latvian scientists, writers and intellectuals.



Foto: Toms Grinbergs, UL

### *Library of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague*



The Czech Academy of Sciences was established in 1992 by the Czech National Council as the Czech successor of the former Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and its tradition goes back to the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences and the Emperor Franz Joseph Czech Academy for Sciences, Literature and Arts. Among its many tasks, the Academy of Sciences is responsible for the Czech Retrospective National Bibliography. More about this in this article by our colleagues Andrea Jelínková and Vojtěch Šícha: 'The Czech National Retrospective

Bibliography Online: A Miracle that Has Come True', in: *Never Finish(ed). The Vitality and Dynamics of Retrospective 'National' Bibliographies for European Print Cultures to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. CERL Papers XV, Eds. Olga Tkachuk, Marian Lefferts, Claudia Fabian (2025). Available as a paperback and free download from the [Harrassowitz](https://www.harrassowitz.de/) website.

*New special member: Biblioteca Berenson, I Tatti, Florence*

In 1900, Bernard Berenson and Mary Smith Costelloe married and moved to a rural property that had been called "Tatti" or "I Tatti" since at least the Middle Ages. Bernard Berenson, who had graduated from Harvard College in 1887, resolved to leave his Florentine estate to his alma mater to create a centre of scholarship that would advance humanistic learning throughout the world, as well as increase understanding of the values by which civilizations develop and survive. The Berenson Library, which contains some 50,000 volumes, plays a vital role in I Tatti's mission to advance scholarship in Italian Renaissance studies. The Library's Special Collections currently contain nearly 3,500 titles including a small number of late medieval manuscripts and incunables, some 600 Cinque- and Seicentine and over 750 eighteenth-century works.



## Soon available at CERL: VD Zurich

[https://data.cerl.org/zurich\\_prints](https://data.cerl.org/zurich_prints)

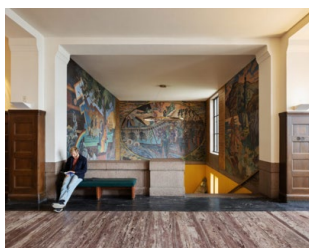
In June 2026, *VD Zürich* will be made public in the CERL data environment. In the last six months the Data Conversion Group and the Zentralbibliothek Zürich have been working to prepare this new database. *VD Zürich* is a digital bibliography listing all items produced by letterpress printing in Zurich between 1479 to and 1830. It currently contains all printed works and typographic broadsheets up to 1540. The listings for the centuries following this are continually updated. The individual descriptions conform to the international RDA standard and reference the German language Integrated Authority File (GND). At the same time, *VD Zürich* functions as a catalogue listing all copies of those resources held by the Zentralbibliothek Zürich and other institutions, as well as links to digital reproductions where available. A wide range of links, to e.g. the VDs, eRara, Swisscovery, the Heritage of the Printed Book database and the CERL Thesaurus make this a wonderfully connected resource.

## CERL Collection Security Summer School

<https://www.cerl.org/collaboration/security/2026summerschool>

The 9th CERL Collection Security Summer School is hosted by the National Library of Norway and will take place on 16-18 September 2026. The event is aimed at librarians and archivists, curators and prevention officers, administrators and reading room staff and registration is now open.

We will look at collection security in practice: an analysis of readers' behaviour in reading rooms, at potential fakes being returned, at how a library dealt with nazi provenances in their collection and how to encourage



reading room staff to spot items that need preventative conservation. We will also explore how plans for a new collection storage system may impact collection security, as well as how we may decide on the value of special collections when we prepare a disaster recovery plan. During the event, there will be ample time for group discussions, behind-the-scenes visits, for example at the National Library and at the University Library in Oslo, as well as a friendly social programme. Please register by writing to [Secretariat@cerl.org](mailto:Secretariat@cerl.org).

The registration fee is 85 Euro.

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## Recipients of 2026 CERL Internship Grants

The CERL Grant Committee is very pleased to announce the conferment of six CERL Grants:

1. To catalogue incunabula at the [Huntington Library](#), San Marino California to **Taisa Baeva** (Russia/Italy), a BA Student of Global Humanities at Sapienza University of Rome who is writing her dissertation on incunabula from Russian libraries sold in the first half of the 20th century.
  2. To catalogue incunabula at the [Beinecke Library, Yale University](#) to **Elena Botturi** (Italy), with an MA from the University of Bologna and a dissertation on the provenance of Venetian incunabula held at the Biblioteca Histórica of the University of Valencia.
  3. To catalogue incunabula at the [Beinecke Library, Yale University](#) to **Paolo Sachet** (Italy), a member of the Printing Revolution and American Collections team, Sapienza University of Rome.
  4. To catalogue incunabula at [Pembroke College, Oxford](#) to **Alexandra Ballová** (Czech Republic), a Special Collections Librarian in Bratislava and PhD student at Masaryk University, Brno.
  5. To catalogue early printed books at [Montefiascone](#) (Viterbo, Italy), Biblioteca Seminario minore vescovile Barbarigo to **Konrad Szymański** (Poland), a curator of early printed books at the Ossolinski National Institute (Ossolineum), Wrocław.
  6. To catalogue early printed books at the [Venerable English College, Rome](#) to **Sarah Cusk** (UK), antiquarian cataloguer at Lincoln College Library, Oxford.
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## CERL Annual Seminar 2026

<https://www.cerl.org/services/seminars/presentations2026>

The seminar will be on 28 October and is hosted by Cambridge University Library, the Old Library, and Pembroke College, maximum 70 people (in person only). Please register at [Secretariat@cerl.org](mailto:Secretariat@cerl.org).

The central theme of the 2026 CERL Annual Seminar will be **materiality**, presenting an opportunity for presentations and discussions

exploring subjects of great current interest, including the ethics of invasive sampling, AI and special collections, pigments, the forensic investigation of medieval manuscripts, the interface between professional curatorial and conservation practice, and the use of advanced 3D imaging technology to explore historical typographical equipment. The conference is being hosted in partnership with the Cambridge University Library Research Institute, with main sessions be held in the baroque Old Library of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and with visits to the University Library, a legal deposit library for more than 300 years, and home of extraordinarily rich historic collections.



We expect to arrange opportunities for visiting and networking in and around other Cambridge libraries. For those able to stay a little longer, special arrangements will be put in place facilitate research access for attendees to items in the University Library collections.

## CERL @ HsH – Researching and teaching the CERL data infrastructure

At Hochschule Hannover – University of Applied Sciences and Arts, I teach in two undergraduate degrees in information management, one standard track and one for students already working in libraries on the basis of previous vocational training. Both degrees combine library and information science with a good background in technology, including courses on programming and data management. As CERL and its data infrastructure provide a perfect example of the kind of cultural heritage data our students will be working with in the future, I am aiming to integrate CERL databases into our curriculum both as a teaching tool and as an object of research. This collaboration will strengthen our students, giving them real data and use cases to work with, as well as CERL, improving its visibility, training future information managers who are already familiar with its data infrastructure and providing external input.

Current activities include:

- **“A knowledge graph for CERL”**: A summer term project for eight students (with previous vocational training) on finding and implementing links between existing CERL databases. The students work closely with Data Conversion Group’s Helena Nebel and already reported on their findings at BiblioCon 2026 (Germany’s largest library conference) and will soon publish a CERL blog.
- **“Management of research information”**: Two seminars on Open Science, research information and research data, taught in the summer terms of 2025 and 2026 in the standard track. As part of their investigation of research data in the humanities, the students learned about MEI as a case study and write Jupyter Notebooks for its API. Last term, one student further explored representing MEI data as RDF in his term paper (and recommended first improving the data quality.)
- **BA Theses**: Freiling (2026), *Online-Information, Ausstattung und Nutzungsbedürfnisse für Sonderlesesäle in deutschen Bibliotheken [Online information, equipment and user needs in special collection reading rooms in German libraries]* was based on a survey distributed via the CERL mailing list and discusses how libraries can improve their reading rooms and websites to facilitate researchers’ work with special collections. A [summary in English](#) is available on the CERL blog, and the entire thesis (in German) has been published as Open Access. Another thesis based on CERL databases is currently under discussion with a student.
- **Research project (2026-27)**: Nachhaltiges Management von Kulturdaten – Strategische Entwicklung der digitalen (Forschungs-)Dateninfrastruktur des Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) [*Sustainable management of cultural data – Strategic development of CERL’s digital (research) data infrastructure*] is a small research project in which I plan to provide a detailed description of the CERL data infrastructure as a case study in non-profit, scholar-led research data infrastructures with a focus on technology, governance and community-building as potential success factors. This may also be further explored in BA theses by our students.

In addition to hoping that the CERL community continues to support our research by answering questions and surveys, I very much welcome CERL members getting in touch to discuss, e.g.:

- Ideas for student projects based on CERL data infrastructures (especially if you are willing to be the external stakeholder / client during the project, as DCG was for the knowledge graph activity described above)
- Questions about the data infrastructure that might be explored in BA theses
- Any projects on which you want to collaborate with me and/or my students
- And anything else you find interesting and want to talk about!



Andreas Walker, HsH ([andreas.walker@hs-hannover.de](mailto:andreas.walker@hs-hannover.de))

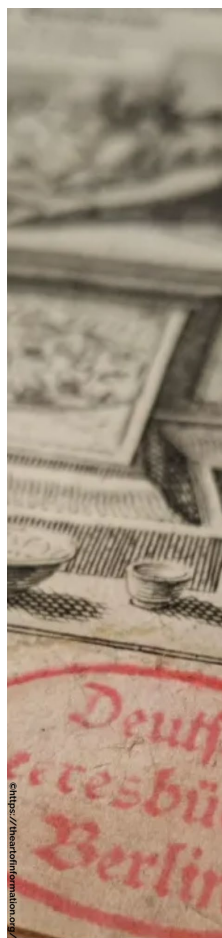
## Provenance Working Group

<https://www.cerl.org/collaboration/work/provenance/main>

The Chair of the of the Working Group is Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła. In February of this year she published the second Provenance Newsletter, which is full of news from all around Europe. The Newsletter can be downloaded [here](#).

The Working Group will also present the 6<sup>th</sup> online session 'Provenance in Book History' on 25 June 2026. The programme is here ( →) and you can register by sending an email to [secretariat@cerl.org](mailto:secretariat@cerl.org).

In June, Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła will also present a paper on the history of book provenance research at [the conference](#) organised by the École du Louvre and UNESCO "Pour une histoire globale de la recherche de provenances – Dimensions historique, méthodologique, juridique, politique et philosophique".



### VI SEMINAR ON BOOK PROVENANCE CERL Provenance Working Group 25th June 2026 online 15:00 CET

15.00-15.20

Alex Alsemgeest, Rijksmuseum

*Four books from the Deutsche Heeresbücherei.  
The multi-layered provenance history of a recent donation to the Rijksmuseum*

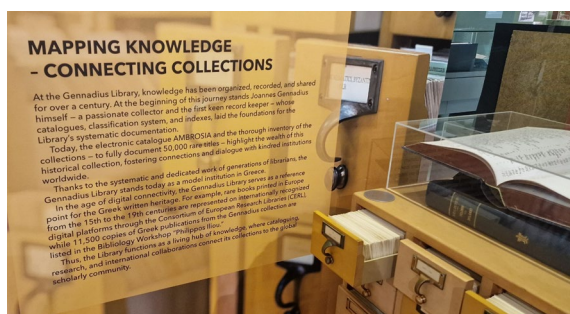
15.30-15.50

Taisa Baeva, Sapienza Università di Roma  
*Russian Incunabula in MEI: Provenance Research on Incunabula Copies Displaced During the Second World War*

16.00-16.20

Anna Chemisova, Sapienza Università di Roma  
*Cataloguing the Provenance of New Zealand Incunabula in MEI*

## Celebrating Gennadius Library's centenary



Members of the CERL Executive Committee and the Board of Directors were very fortunate to have their Spring meetings at the Gennadius Library in Athens (20-22 April 2026). This was in time to join the celebrations for the Library's centenary. CERL members admired a wonderful exhibition and attended a conference with the title *From private libraries to public knowledge: collecting, curating and the future of libraries*. CERL Secretariat members gave papers at the event. Jason McElligott (Marsh's Library and CERL Treasurer) spoke about *The Personal Library of Benjamin Guinness*; Cristina Dondi (La Sapienza, Rome and CERL Secretary) spoke about *Technology and the Digital Future of Libraries and Collections: the role and experience of CERL*; and Kristian Jensen focused on *The Transition from Private to Public Collection, in the Light of an Ethics of Responsibility*. The papers were streamed and recorded and are [available here](#).

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## Manuscripts Working Group

<https://www.cerl.org/collaboration/manuscriptexperts/main>

Daryl Green, the Chair of the Manuscripts Working Group, together with Ian Holt of the Zentralbibliothek Solothurn, organised a Business Meeting of the Manuscripts Working Group, followed by a conference, on 9-10 March 2026. The events were hosted by the Zentralbibliothek Solothurn, Switzerland.



During the business meeting, some clear areas of work emerged that would be of European or international interest. The Working Group agreed to organise the 10th Manuscripts conference (planned for 2028), and aimed to promote information sharing around national or regional work in manuscripts by hosting a once or twice a year online seminar which can also be recorded and added to CERL's online library. Separate sub-committees will look into

assessing the needs of the new generation of professionals currently in training; international standards for core data in MSS descriptions to help progress linked open data; the formulation of a white paper on sustainability of manuscripts experts for European Council or other European heritage watch groups.

The conversation continued during the successful conference Collections Across Repositories: Manuscripts and their custodians held the following day. We were grateful to those who were able to attend the meeting, and to the colleagues at the Zentral Bibliothek who gave us such a warm welcome and closed the day with a splendid display of medieval and early modern manuscripts in the ZB Solothurn.

On the third day, several colleagues went to visit the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen, the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, and the library at the University of Bern, who welcomed members of the CERL Manuscripts Working Group to their libraries and showed them wonderful items from their collections.

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## Second Bookbinding Academy

<https://boekbandengenootschap.nl/activiteiten-bnb/bookbindings-academy-2026/>

The videos of this year's speakers are available via the CERL Youtube

- Mitchel Gundrum (Huntington Library, Pasadena) ['In secret and at high speed': Anselme Faust's 1612 Beschrijvinghe/Prescription, Europe's Earliest Bookbinding Manual](#)
- Daphne Wouts (Leiden University) [A special bookbinding by Louis Elzevier in the town library of Enkhuizen \(Netherlands\): the presentation copies of Martinus Smetius' Inscriptionum liber \(1588\)](#)
- Katell Lavéant (Allard Pierson, Amsterdam) and Malcolm Walsby (ENSIBB, Lyon) [Bookbindings in Two Sixteenth-Century Private 'Dutch' Libraries: From Local Logics to Personal Choices](#)

## STC to ESTC, Past, Present, and Future: A Centenary Symposium

ESTC British Library and ESTC North America organise a symposium celebrating the centenary of the 1926 publication of *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, edited by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave. In the 100 years since its publication, the Short-Title Catalogue (STC), its revised and enlarged second edition (published in three volumes between 1976 and 1991), and its successor, the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), have become invaluable resources for librarians, scholars, and bibliographers alike. ESTC's mission to "record every distinct letterpress item produced during the hand-press era" in the British Isles has so far resulted in identifying 500,000 distinct imprints held in more than 3 million copies worldwide.



In 2025, ESTC was re-launched as part of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL)'s ecosystem of databases and is accessible for free at <https://datb.cerl.org/estc>. It continues to be co-managed by ESTC British Library (ESTC/BL) and ESTC North America (ESTC/NA).

The one-day symposium, which will take place at the British Library on 16 November 2026, seeks to celebrate the legacy of the first two editions of STC and explore the promise of the newly re-launched ESTC. The organisers expect the final programme to include a mixture of short papers and discussion and are keen to represent as broad a field as possible from those who work with ESTC whether for research and other uses or as contributors at any stage in their career. They invite submissions for short papers from early-career researchers and professionals, on topics such as:

- Histories of STC or STC 2nd edition, their publication, and their creators
- ESTC data as research resource and researcher perspectives
- Computational use of ESTC data
- The future of ESTC: what's next for union catalogues?
- Metadata and theory/practice of union cataloguing
- ESTC beyond research – use in teaching, bookselling, etc
- STC and ESTC in the retrospective national bibliography landscape

Please write to Julia King with a short abstract (no more than 250 words) and title of a 15–20 minute paper and indicate whether you wish to participate in person or online. The deadline is **12 June 2026**.

*Julia King, British Library ([Julia.King@bl.uk](mailto:Julia.King@bl.uk))*

## Nottebohm Fellowship in Antwerp

<https://museumplantinmoretus.be/en/nottebohm-fellowship-book-historical-research>

The Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library and Museum Plantin-Moretus are pleased to announce that applications are now open for the annual Nottebohm Fellowship. The application deadline is **1 October 2026**, see URL above for more information and how to apply.

Each year, this short-term fellowship supports two researchers wishing to conduct book historical research in the collections of both institutions. The fellowship is made possible through the generous support of the Thierry and Frédéric Nottebohm Grant from the Nottebohm Family Foundation. Applications are invited from researchers working on a wide range of topics within book history, including the materiality of the book, printing techniques and technologies, analytical bibliography, the socio-economic history of printing, publishing and the book trade, reading practices, provenance research, illustration and visual culture, typography, and the history of collections etc.



## Recent CERL blog posts

We are very grateful to the authors of these blog post. Feel free to contact [secretariat@cerl.org](mailto:secretariat@cerl.org) if you would also like to publish a blog with CERL on [cerlblog.wordpress.com](http://cerlblog.wordpress.com).

- Camillo Carlo Pellizzari di San Girolamo, [Improving the interconnection between Wikidata and the CERL Thesaurus](#)
- Antonia Delle Fratte, [Reconstructing the Manuscript Collection of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice and the Biblioteca Universitaria of Padua](#)
- Agnieszka Franczyk-Cegła, [Rare Books on the Move: Trade, Transfer, and the Law](#)

## Short News

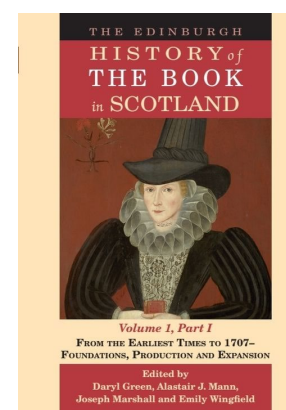
- In his [FT opinion piece](#) in relation to the UK government preparations to publish a new strategy for public libraries later this year, Richard Ovenden (Bodleian Library, Oxford) wrote 'The UK must embrace its libraries in the age of AI'
- FARO and BibliothequeaireErfgoed.be have formed a working group to explore the decolonisation of library collections. Read [their declaration of commitment](#) (in Dutch) and the [DE BIAS tool](#) they used.
- Recently, Europeana drew attention to their [dataspace](#), describing it as 'a flagship initiative funded by the European Union, [that] enables the sharing and reuse of cultural heritage data across Europe. On 18 March 2026, the ECHOES project that is responsible for the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH) and Europea issued a [Joint Statement](#) on the complementarity of the dataspace and ECCCH.

## Now available: The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland

<https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/series-the-edinburgh-history-of-the-book-in-scotland>

In this publication, '69 leading scholars, librarians and archivists come together to analyse the development of the book in Scotland from the early seventh century BCE to the 1707 Union, from depictions of books in carved stone monuments to the printing presses of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow producing pamphlets and receipts used for everyday business at the end of the seventeenth century.'

- *Part I: Foundations, Production and Expansion* establishes the overall boundaries of manuscript and printed book history in Scotland across this millennium and sets the making of books within the wider cultural contexts at play, both at home and abroad.
- *Part II: Networks, Collections and Genre* focuses on the types of books and printed material that were being made, produced, collected and used in Scotland in the medieval and early modern periods.



CERL Marsh's Library, St Patrick's Close, Dublin, Ireland, D08F K79

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**ISSN** 1680-4546 (appears twice a year)

**www.cerl.org**