

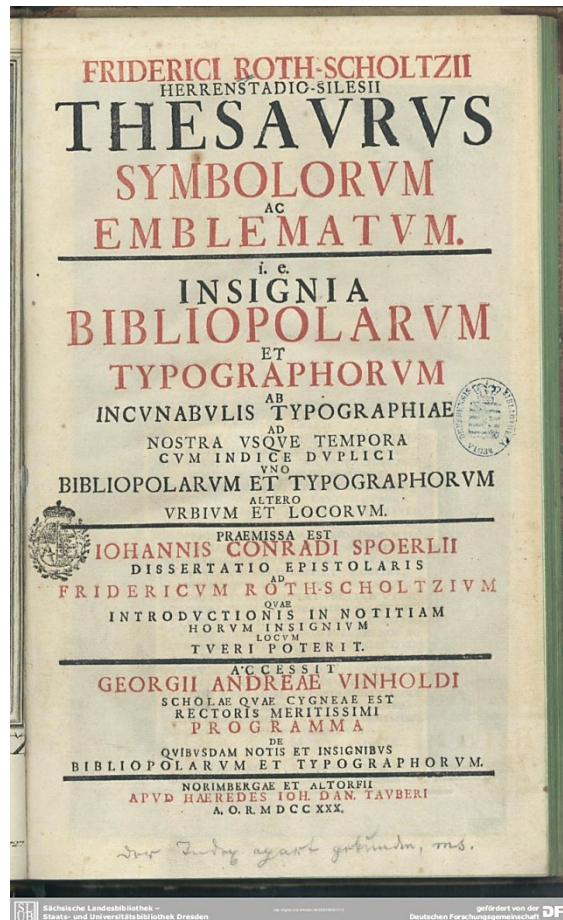
Anja Wolkenhauer

Printers' marks in scholarly research: overview and questions

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Friedrich Roth-Scholtz, *Thesaurus Symbolorum*, Nürnberg 1729-1733





One of the printer's marks of Johann Schott, Straßburg, 1504





The beginnings: 17th / 18th century

The early 18th century coincides with the first comprehensive attempts to describe and catalogue printer's marks in a systematic way. The cataloguing is based on the single sheet and its iconography, not, be it noted, on the printed book. Any relevance that printer's marks may have had as trademarks is passed over.

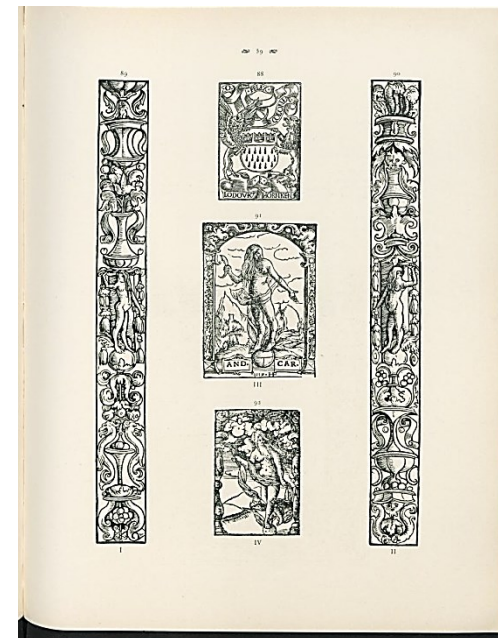
The goal the work has set itself is the chronological determination and classification of printer's marks in terms of their respective owners. The enigmatic character of many signets is adduced as proof that they represent a complex art form akin to that of emblems and hence, qua genre, in need of explanation.



The 19th century: Silvestre, Heitz, McKerrow

- Fixation on graphic representation, while, at the same time, neglecting biographic, chronological and textual data, is characteristic of the catalogues of the time.
- **Behind these catalogues there are no books or libraries, but only single-sheet collections!!**

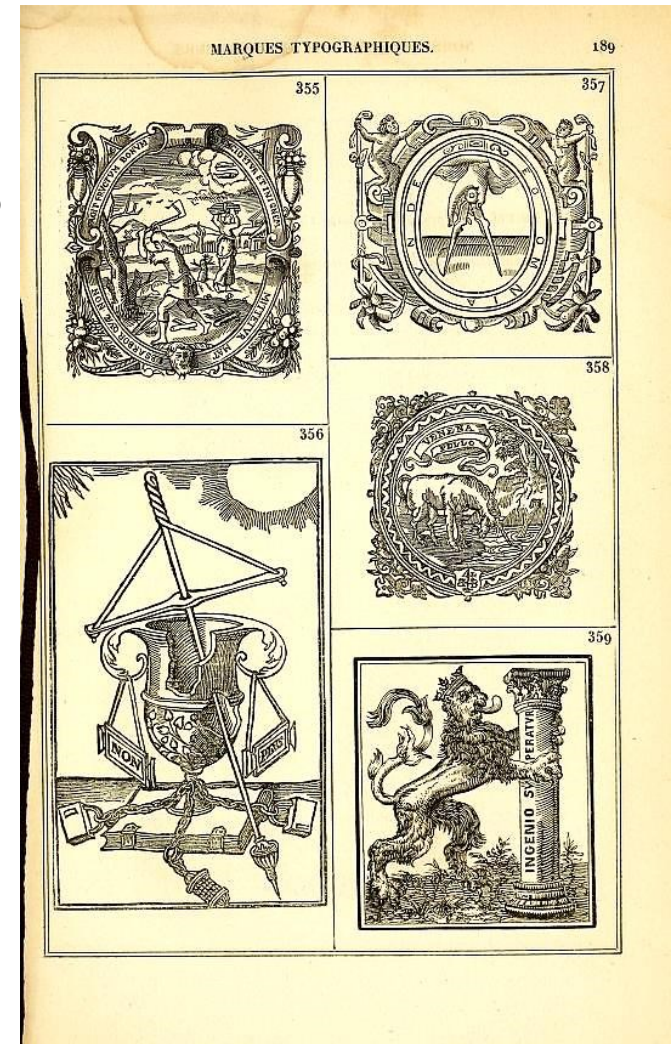
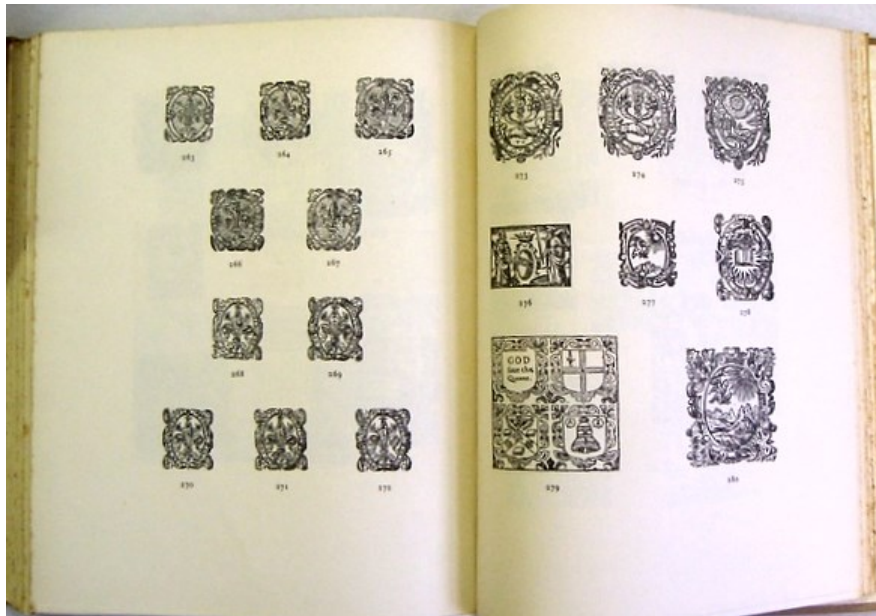
P. Heitz,
Büchermarken,
8 volumes about
different cities and
countries, 1892-1908





McKerrow,, Printer's and
Publishers' Devices in
England and Scotland,
1485-1640, London 1913

L.-C. Silvestre, Marques
des Imprimeurs ... des
libraires et imprimeurs
qui ont exercé en
France 1853, 2^e 1867





The single-sheet collections

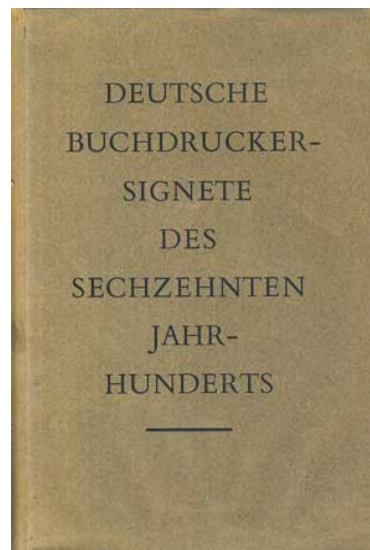
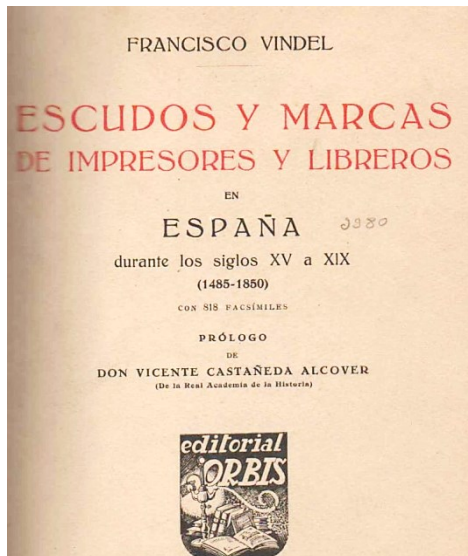
An analysis of current inventory catalogues and historical auction catalogues in respect of scope, structure and location of sheet collections a key research desiderandum.

Famous collections (in Germany):

- Stiebel, Frankfurt: 10.000 sheets, used by Heitz
 - Berlepsch, today in Wolfenbüttel, 6000 sheets
 - Grisebach, Berlin, ca. 3000 sheets
 - Weissenbach, formerly in Leipzig, now destroyed, ca. 50.000 sheets
-

20th century: printer's marks and emblematics

All these works take their point of departure from the individual case; they are silent about the *longue durée* or the larger European cultural scene. They are important in the field of book history, but in the entirety of research bearing on the early modern era, they fell off the radar.



e.g. Vinel, Marcos,
1942;
Grimm,
Buchdruckersignete,
1965;
Vaccaro, Marche,
1983;



Further questions:

1. Printer's marks are a form of branding, hence as old as commerce itself. But what are they actually trying to communicate? Can one from the signets and their progressive alteration learn anything useful about the self-perception of, say, a printer or a publisher elite *in statu nascendi*? (**Self-fashioning**)
 2. Where did the knowledge come from that was needed to design highly complex printer's marks? (**Cartography of Knowledge**)
 3. Do the constant alterations in printer's marks perhaps tell us something about other alterations going on in habitual ways of seeing, not to say the expectations reposed in the new media? Could it be that, with their advent, we have a new, ultra-sensitive yardstick for the analysis of modes of social perception? (**Historical Media Research**)
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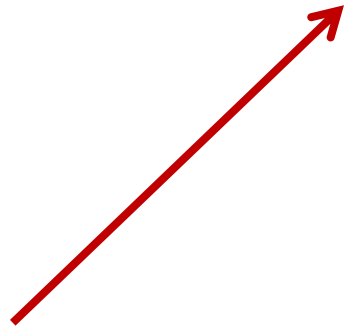


Data required for further research on printer's marks:

- Chronological and geographical data
(when and where is the signet used?)
 - Book-specific data
(in which prints and where within a particular print is the signet traceable?)
 - Media-specific data
(iconography of the pictorial segment of the mark, location and use of motti and other text segments)
 - Biographical data
(what does the printer's educational background and his book publications look like?)
-



The printer's mark of Andreas Cratander in Roth-Scholtzius, Thesaurus (1730)



Printer's mark of Andreas Cratander, printer in Basel

Occasio), completed by the following *motti*:

Brevis consulendi occasio

(Caesar, gall. 5,29, cf. Phaedrus fab.5,8)

Ὡς ακμῆς πάσης ὀξύτερος τελέθω,

(Anth.Pal. 16, 275: the statue of Lysipp)

Καιρός δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος

(Hesiod, Erga 694 from Erasmus, Adagia)

fronte capillata, post haec occasio calva,

(Cato, Disticha 2, 26, 2)

Taken from: Gellius, Noctes Atticae, Basel 1519



Synopsis: Cratanders printer's mark 1519- ca. 1539



1519,
attributed to
Hans Franck

UB Basel, CF III 5:1
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-2067>>



1522,
attributed to
Franz Gerster

UB Basel, DE IX 12;
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-1422>>



1523,
Jacob Faber /
Hans Holbein

UB Basel FJ V 17;
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-401>



1525,
Jacob Faber /
Hans Holbein

UB Basel FNP VIII 45:1;
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-1772>>

Screenshot: Online Coins of the Roman Empire (OCRE)

numismatics.org/ocre/results?q=**

Webmail PhilSem Uni Tü UB Gnomon kvk_suche WBIS Plan3t Biblioblog | Pla... KIRKE RI OPAC Pict paed stc kupfer

Refine Results

Authority ▾

Deity ▾

Denomination ▾

Findspot ▾

Issuer ▾



Manufacture ▾

Material ▾



Mint ▾

Object Type ▾

Portrait ▾

Date	25 BC - 23 BC	
Denomination	Quinarius	
Mint	Emerita	
Obverse	AVGVST: Head of Augustus, bare, left	
Reverse	P CARISI LEG: Victory standing right, placing wreath on trophy with dagger and sword at base	
		objects: 12; hoard: 1

RIC I (second edition) Augustus 1B

Date	25 BC - 23 BC	
Denomination	Quinarius	
Mint	Emerita	
Obverse	AVGVST: Head of Augustus, bare, left	
Reverse	P CARISI LEG: Victory standing right, placing wreath on trophy with dagger and sword at base	
		objects: 13

RIC I (second edition) Augustus 2A

Date	25 BC - 23 BC	
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Conclusions

Printer's marks are an important source material for the study of the early modern era. They constitute a singular body of evidence for a whole raft of studies into long-term changes, whether manifested on the level of media history, book history, social and mental history.

But if printer's marks are to deliver on their potential usefulness, what will be needed is a coordinated cataloguing on a truly European scale. The key point to grasp here is that, apart from systematically targeting the regions – and here we should begin with printer's marks *in situ* – new categories will need to be developed if we are to capture the countless single-sheet collections.
