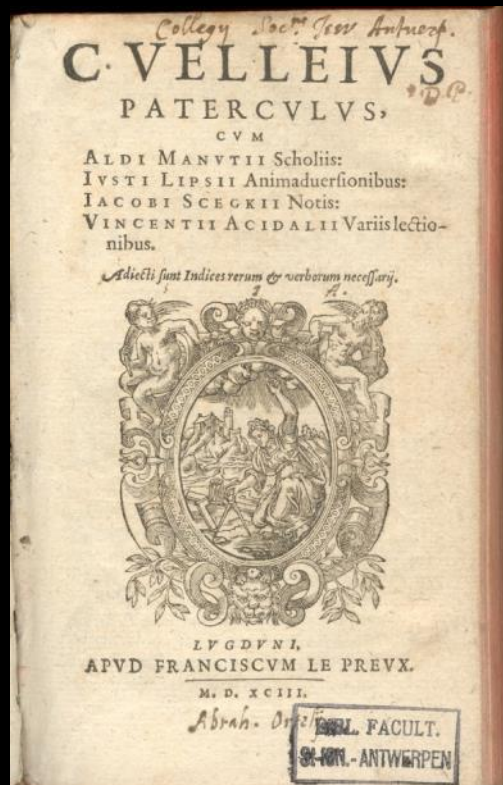Why are we gathering provenance data?

¶ The historical framework
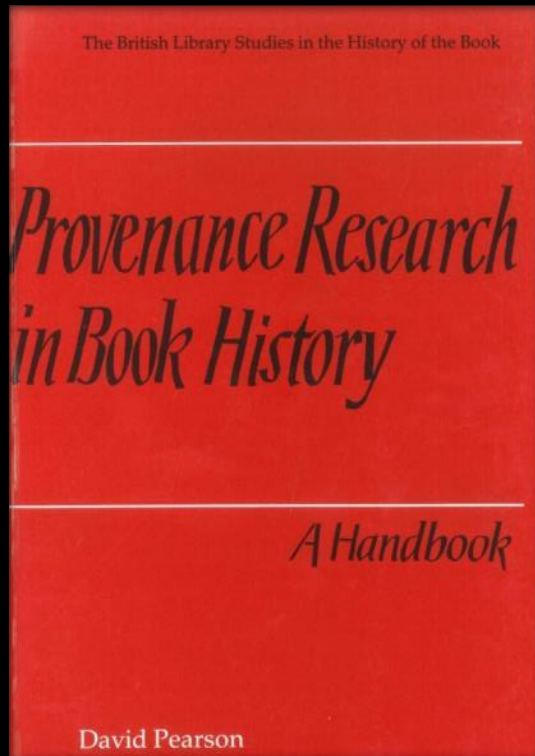

Pierre Delsaerdt

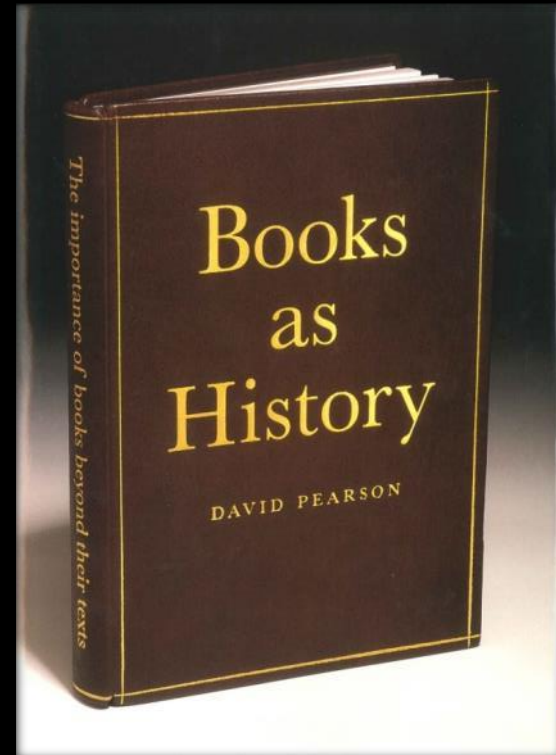*University of Antwerp – Flanders Heritage Library*

London *The Warburg Institute* 11.03.2015

Provenance research is interesting and useful. But interestingness and usefulness are not sufficient to make it sustainable in a competitive environment.

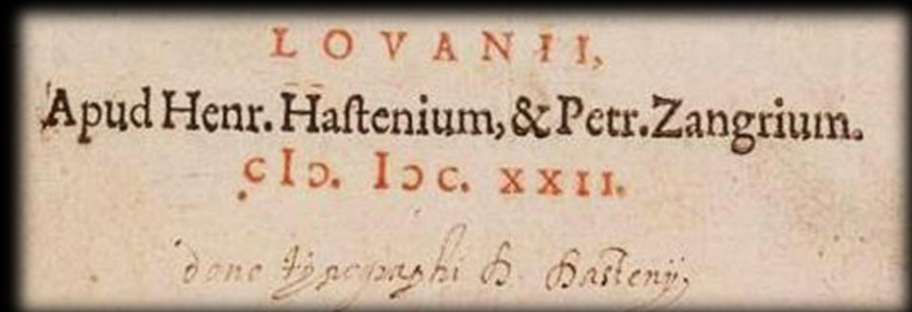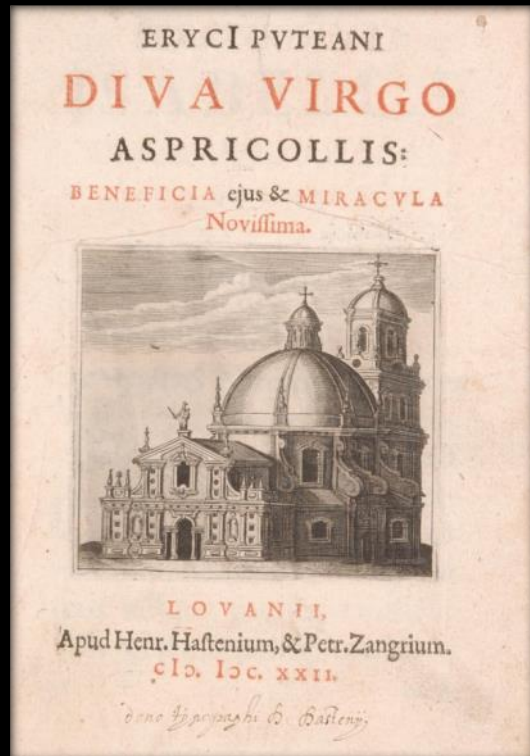# 1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

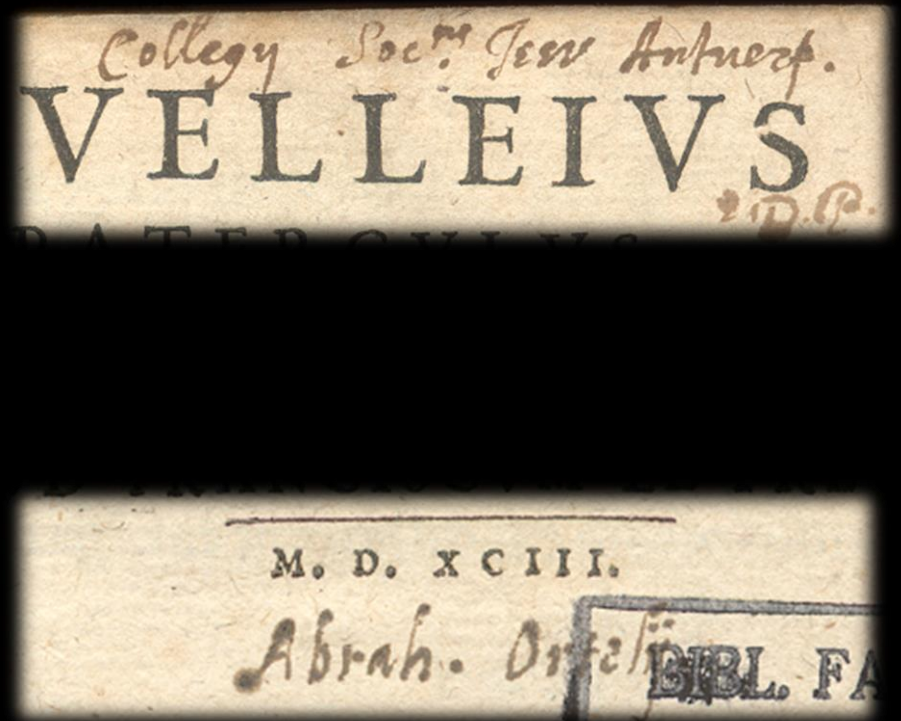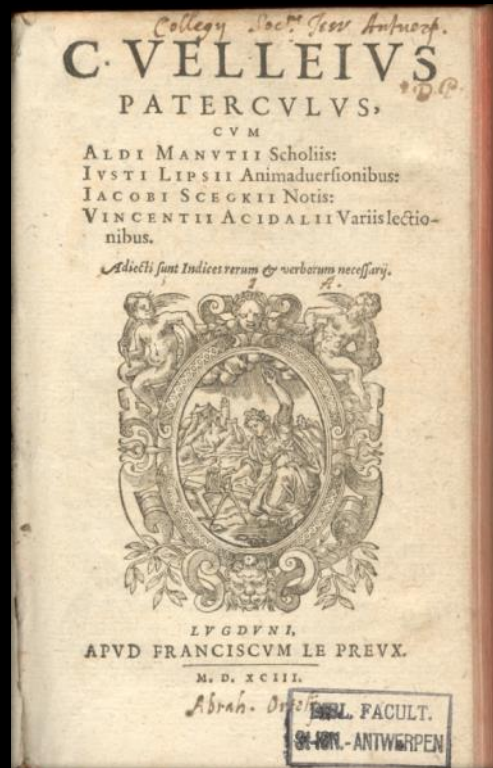¶ David Pearson, *Provenance research in book history*, 1998

¶ David Pearson, *Books as history*, 2008

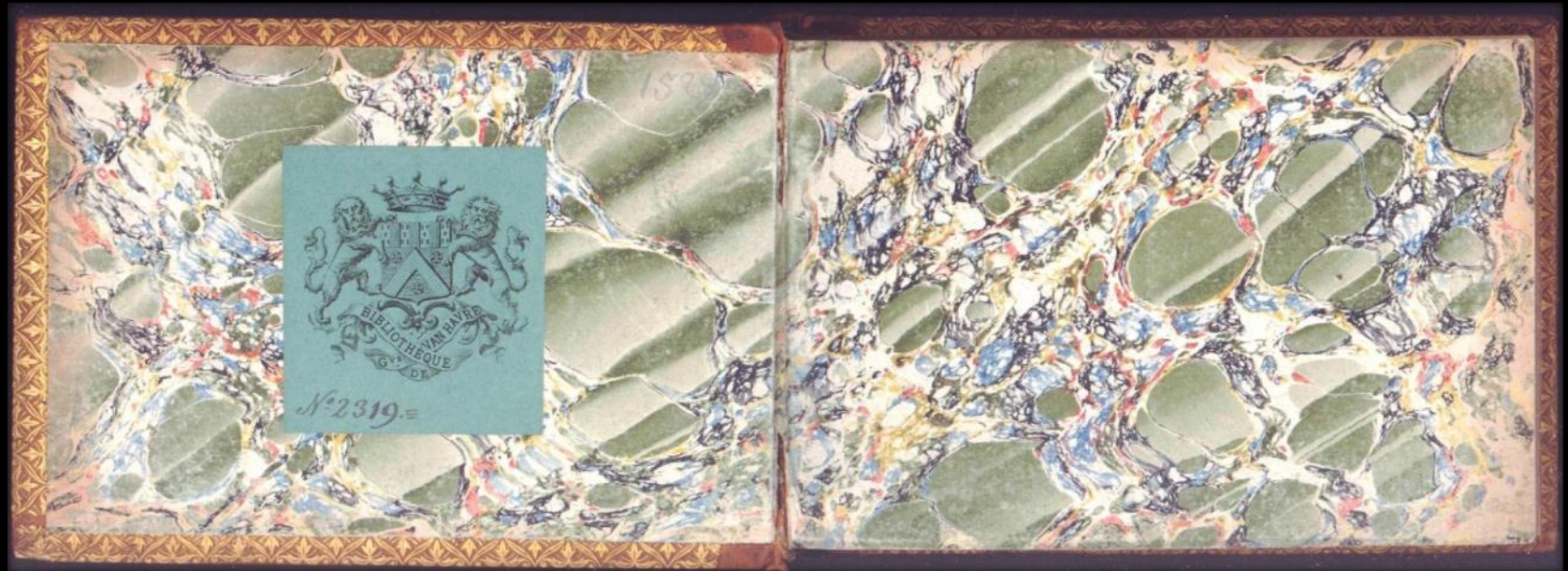# 1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

¶ Authorship, presentation copies

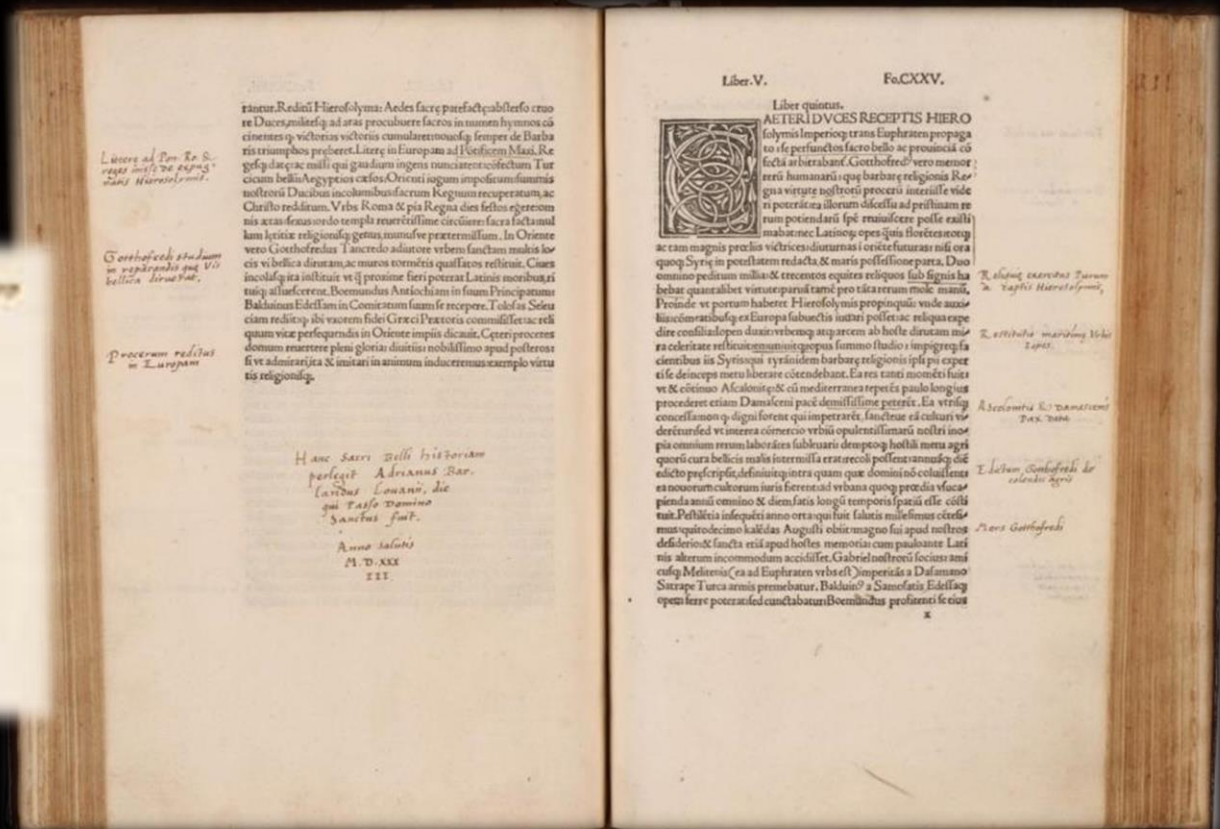# 1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

¶ History of private and institutional libraries

1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research
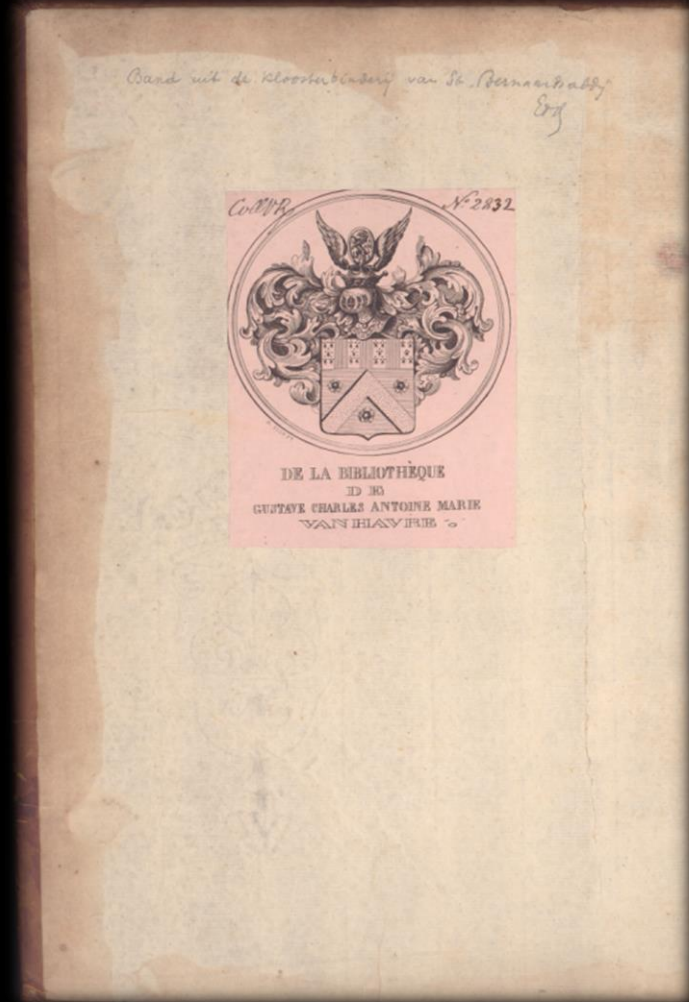
1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research
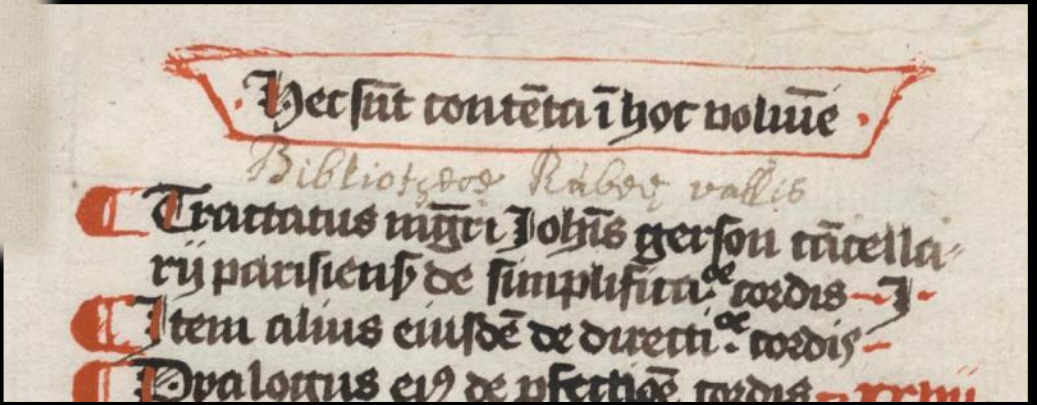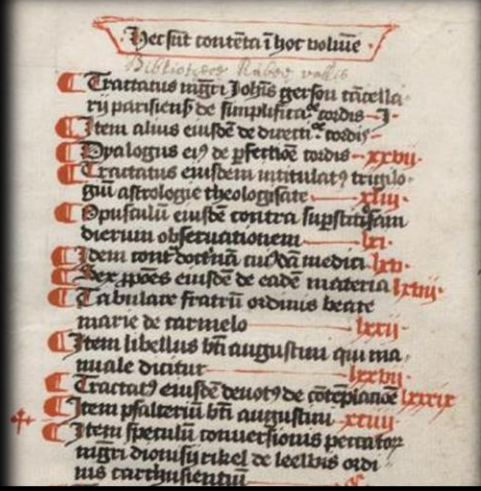

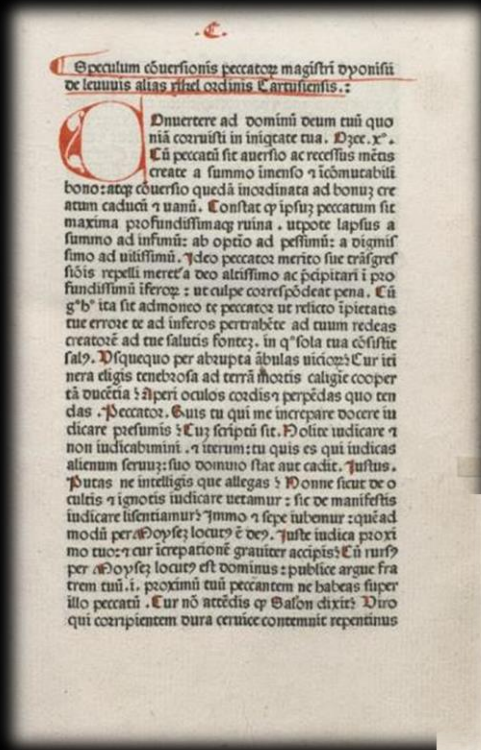Hanc Sacri Belli historiam perlegit Adrianus Bar.
landus Louann. die
qui Tasso Domino
Sanctus fuit.

Anno salutis
M.D.XXX
III

¶ History of reading

1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research

¶ 'Provenance collections'

1. Provenance: matching library management and historical research
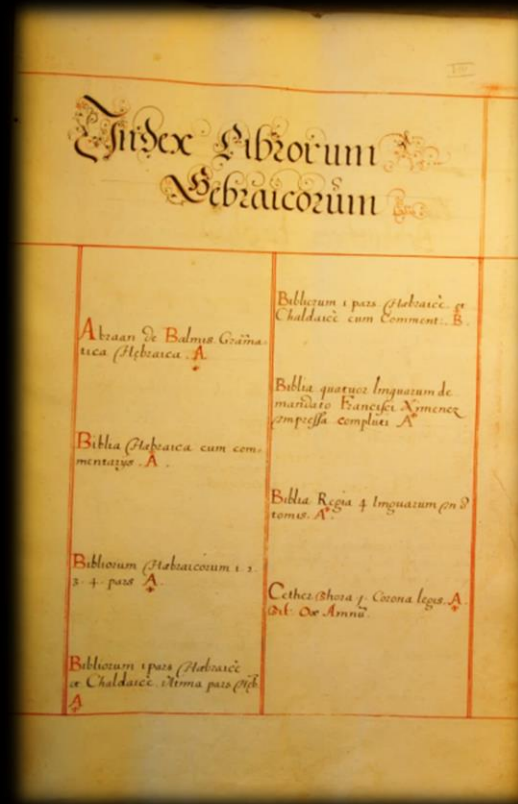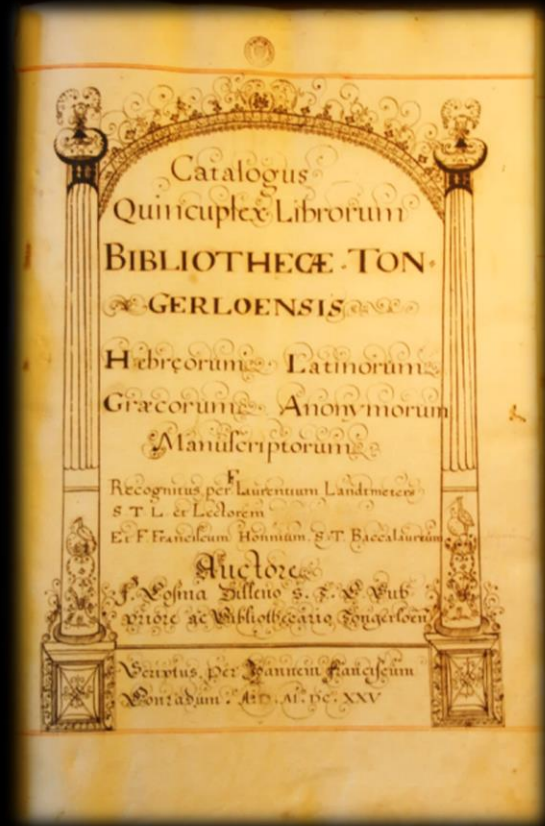

¶ Preservation issues
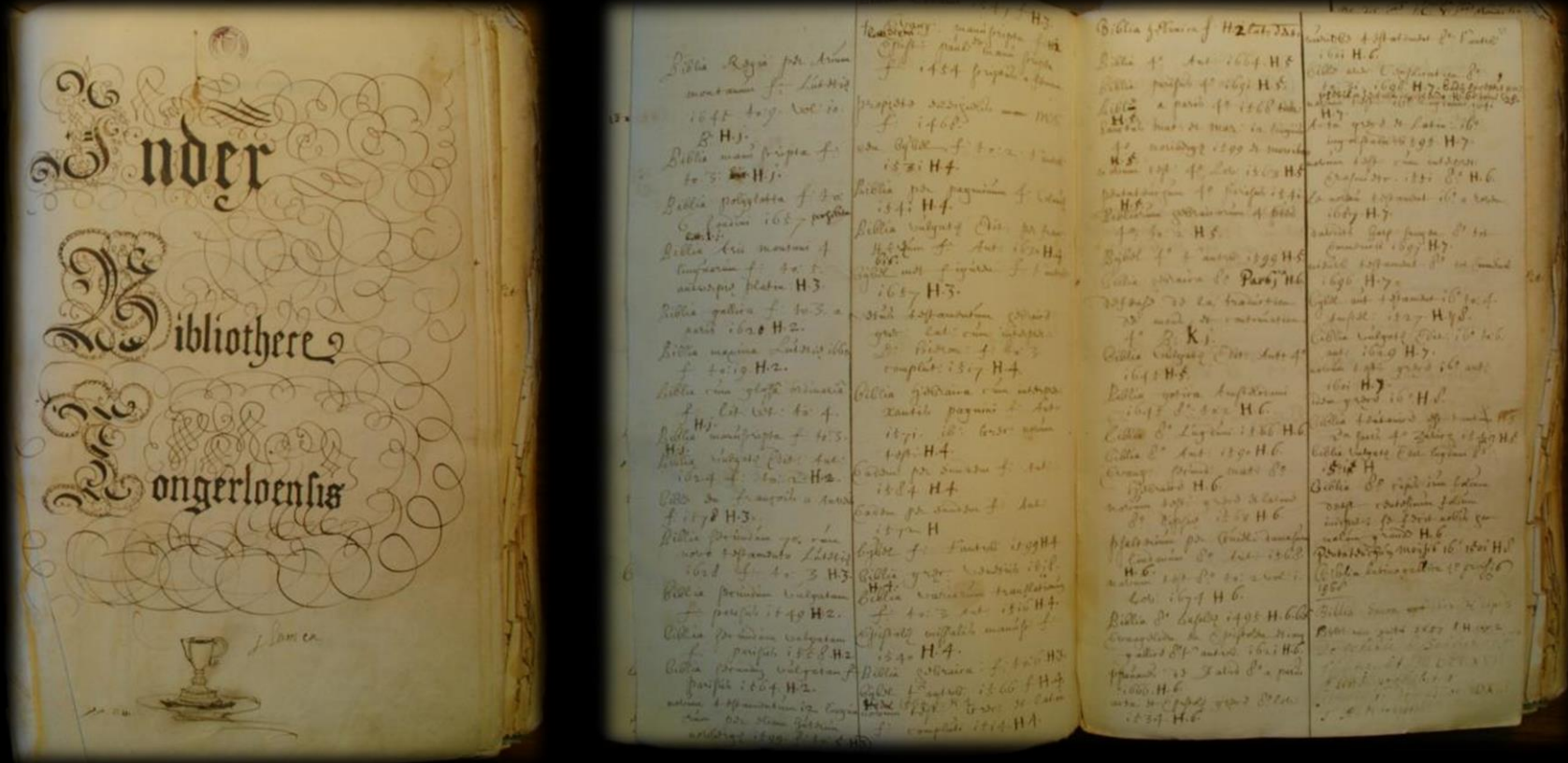
2. A recent experience

¶ Tongerlo Abbey, Belgium

2. A recent experience

¶ Catalogue of Tongerlo Abbey Library, 1625

2. A recent experience

¶ Catalogue of Tongerlo Abbey Library, 1707

2. A recent experience

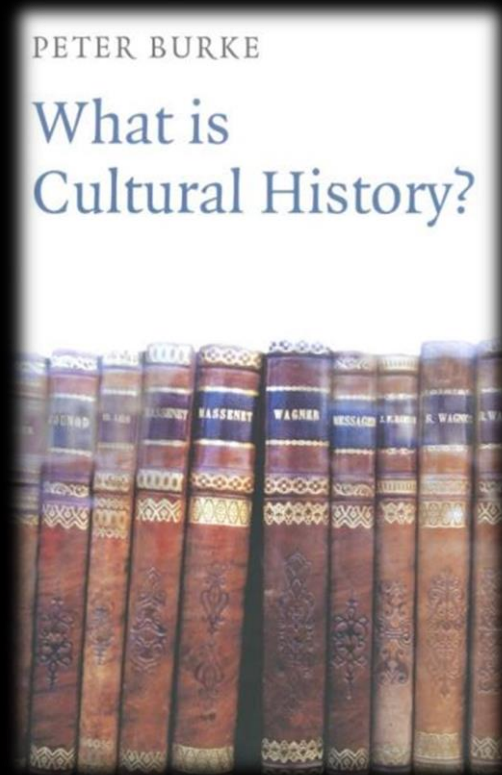¶ Catalogue of Tongerlo Abbey Library, 1707

- **heritage-oriented !**
- **no clear research questions !**
- **no underlying theory !**

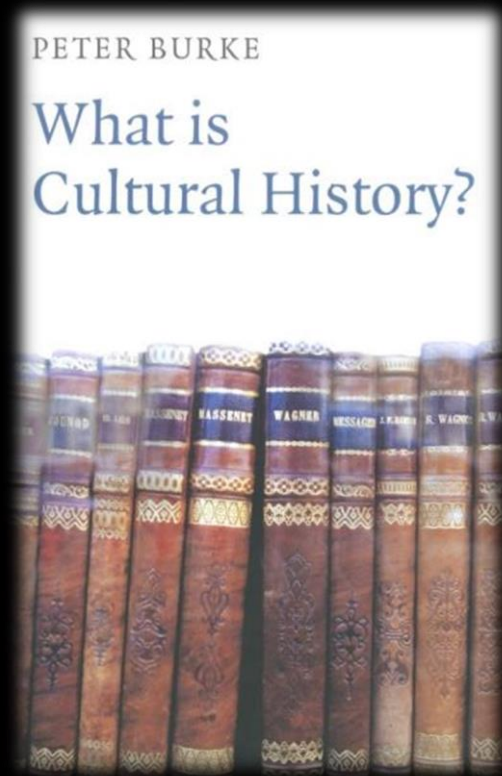# Interestingness and usefulness are not sufficient

- Cultural history: theoretical approaches
- Integration of research data
- International cooperation & crowdsourcing

3. Cultural history: theoretical approaches

¶ Peter Burke, *What is cultural history?* 2004

3. Cultural history: theoretical approaches

PETER BURKE

What is Cultural History?

- Conspicuous consumption
- Appropriation
- The cultures of collecting (incl. the canon of –)
- Emergence of concept of national heritage
- Dedications, patterns of patronage, network analysis
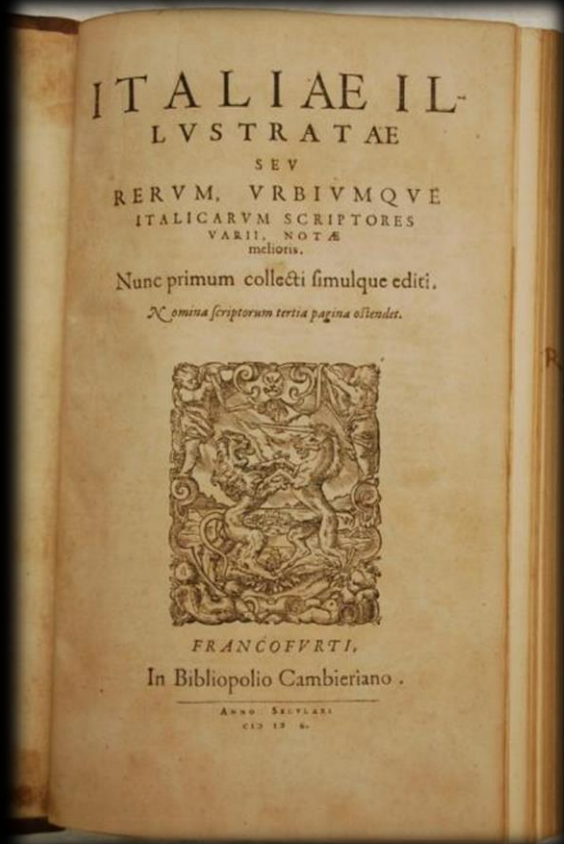- Gender studies
- …

4. Integration of research data

Integration of *bibliographical* data and *copy-specific* information (e.g. Material Evidence in Incunabula)
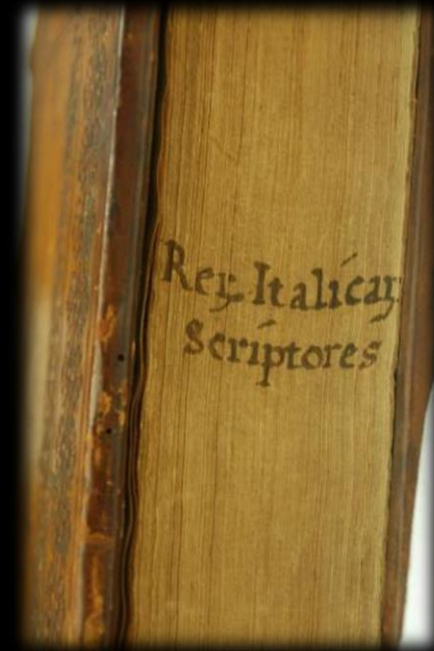
But also combining *physical* evidence (provenance marks in specific copies) and *archival* evidence:
- library catalogues
- sales catalogues (auctions)
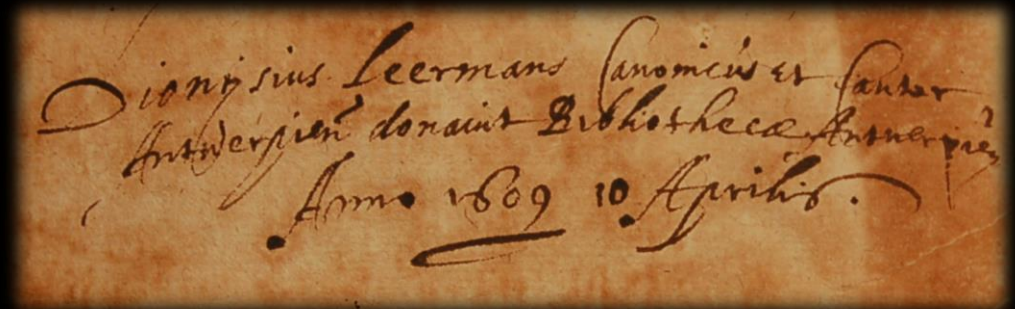- probate inventories
- ...
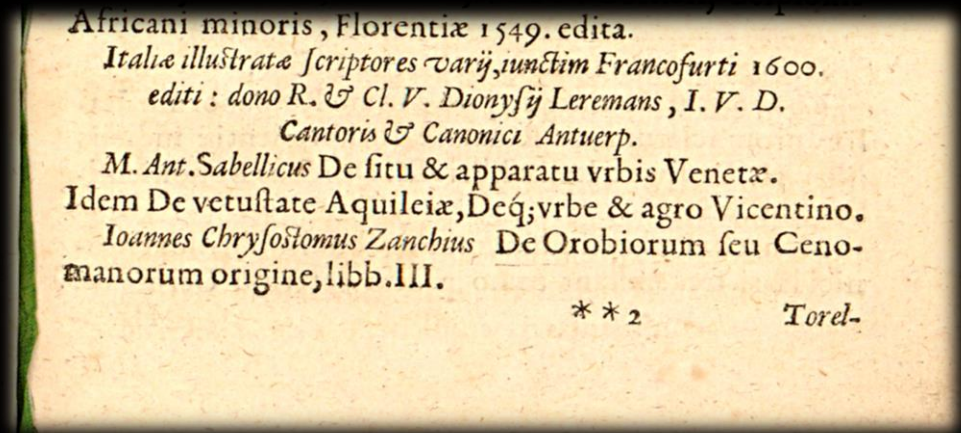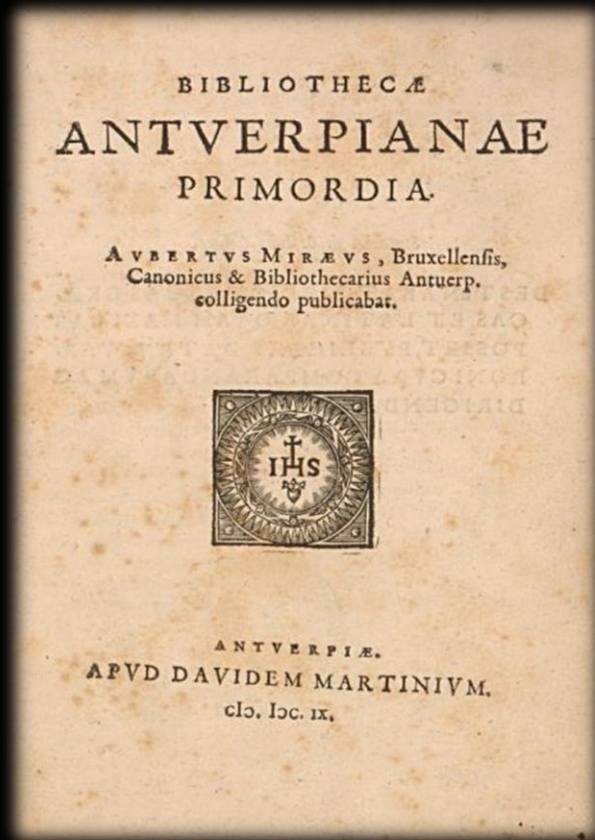
4. Integration of research data

¶ *Italiae illustratae seu (…) scriptores*, Frankfurt 1600

¶ Flyleaf

4. Integration of research data

¶ Aubertus Miraeus, *Bibliothecae Antverpianae primordia,* Antwerp 1609

5. International cooperation & crowdsourcing

¶ David Pearson, *Provenance research in bookhistory*, p. 2:

'The whole notion of a one-country approach is out of place when considering a book trade which has always been international. The different methods of marking book ownership used by British collectors down the centuries have been mirrored or influenced by similar habits overseas, particularly in continental Europe.'

6. And finally…

CERL Seminar

Library history: why, what, how ?

University of Antwerp
27 October 2015

¶ pierre.delsaerdt@uantwerpen.be

CONSORTIUM OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES