



Library & Information History Group

News from the Chair

As many of you will be aware, our visit to Bath for the summer 2022 conference was somewhat hampered by both organisers independently catching covid-19 within a week of each other just before it was due to take place. I am grateful to all our speakers, to outgoing Conference Organiser Angela Platt and to the rest of the committee for helping us move the whole thing online. It turned out to be a fabulous event, despite the last-minute venue shift, as I hope you'll see demonstrated in the write-up featured in this issue.

As well as saying farewell to Angela at the conference, two other committee members stepped down after several years with LIHG: Danielle Westerhof (Secretary) and Sophie Defrance (Marketing and Social Media). I'm pleased to say that Emma Laws (formerly Website Editor) has moved into the role of Secretary, and that we are recruiting for new members to join the committee, having split the marketing and social media roles to help with workload. At time of publication, there is still time to send in your expressions of interest for the Conference Organiser and Web Editor roles. If you've missed the deadline but still wish to get involved with the committee, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me [j.dye@nms.ac.uk].

Thanks again to our contributors and to our Newsletter Editor, Alex Kither, for pulling together this rich and engaging issue. As ever, please get in touch with Alex (contact details in the back matter) if you have any news, events, or articles that you would like us to feature in future issues.

Jill Dye

Chair, CILIP Library & Information History Group

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The Social Life of the Sybil Campbell Collection

A digitisation project of a small independent library

The origins of the Sybil Campbell Collection can be traced back to the establishment of Crosby Hall (London) as halls of residence for the international visitors of the British Federation of Women Graduates (then the British Federation of University Women) in 1927. It was believed that a library would be “the necessary intellectual stronghold at the heart” of this institution, borrowing Manguel's words¹.

Led by Theodore Bosanquet and Caroline Spurgeon, a library committee secured donations from prominent intellectual figures, such as Virginia Woolf, and several governments. It became a motley collection due to its dependence on serendipity and networking.

The Sybil Campbell Collection received its name when it relocated to a remodelled room thanks to the efforts of Sybil Campbell (a pioneer female magistrate) in the 1960s. In the 1970s, the collection changed its focus when members of the Collection Trust believed that it should emphasise works for and by women; this shift resulted in a big weeding exercise and a new acquisition policy.

The library underwent a period of instability when the Federation relocated to Great James Street. It spent much of the 1990s in storage until it finally found a permanent

home at the University of Winchester in the early 2000s.



Figure 1: Detail of one of the shelves of the Sybil Campbell Collection.

Curatorship approach to digitisation

This digitisation research project argues that small independent libraries provide an excellent opportunity to investigate what Prescott² refers to as ‘curatorship digitisation’, consisting in virtual objects accompanied by contextual information. Independent libraries are well suited for this kind of approach

¹ Manguel, A. (2009) *The Library at Night*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.104.

² Prescott, A. (2012) ‘The digital library’. In: Hughes, L. (ed.) *Evaluating and Measuring the Value, Use and Impact of Digital Collections*. London: Facet, 13-34.

because their origin is usually easier to trace and offer a compelling story of survival.

As part of this project, the social life of this library in digital format will be told with a focus on its fragile history: fragility has recently been explored by Pettegree and der Weduwen, who believe that the historical norm for libraries is that of “a repeating cycle of creation and dispersal, decay and reconstruction”³. Undeniably, recent public library closures would attest to this fact. Yet, what made this library survive as an entity lies precisely in the determination of the people who looked after it and their relentless belief in its value.

Users' voices

A curated digital collection is enriched by its users' voice, as exemplified by the Gothic Archive project⁴. To this end, the initial stages of this research project entailed a series of quantitative interviews and a document analysis of the Sybil Campbell Collection Newsletters.

Qualitative interviews have been successfully used to help users find their own expressions of their relationship with heritage⁵. On the other hand, unobtrusive research, such as document analysis, provides a different type of insight by eliciting users' feelings and experiences without intervention⁶. Document

analysis is a well-known historiographical tool which suits the overall philosophy of creating a digitisation product from a humanistic (curated) perspective.

The six interviews and the analysis of ten newsletters carried out during the pilot study of this project revealed telling similarities between what participants expressed and what the newsletters showed: a collection that brings joy and inspires learning, a general interest in its history and the Federation that curated it, a yearning for its past location at Crosby Hall, and a lively atmosphere of culture and education surrounding it.



Figure 2: Example of bookplate from the collection.

Potential direction

Spencer⁷ has explored the possibility of the bookplates present in many of the volumes in this collection constituting an archive into the

³ Pettegree, A. and der Weduwen, A. (2021) *Library: a Fragile History*. London: Profile Books, p. 3.

⁴ Fortier, R. and James, H. (2015) 'Becoming the Gothic Archive: from digital collection to digital humanities'. In: Sacco, K.L., Richmond, S.S., Parme, S.M. and Wilkes, K.F. (eds.) *Supporting Digital Humanities for Knowledge Acquisition in Modern Libraries*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 196-213.

⁵ Jones, S. (2004) *Early Medieval Sculpture and the Production of Meaning, Value and Place: the Case of Hilton of Cadboll*. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.

⁶ Lee, R. (2000) *Unobtrusive Methods In Social Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

life of women intellectuals during the 1920s. Following Spencer's suggestion, this research aims to digitise many of the original bookplates to gain entry into its history of provenance, networking and donations.

The digitisation approach taken by this project is informed by hypertext theory and associative reading, which defend that the digital medium facilitates a kind of reading that is not solely linear. For Staley⁷, history is best understood via association from a piece of text to contextual information or images.

Finally, this research would highly benefit from the addition of potential users' opinions: those users who might not know that this

collection exists but would be interested in it due to its implications for the study of independent libraries, women education and cultural networks, amongst other areas. Professionals currently involved in the digitisation project would also be welcomed to take part in the next round of interviews.

If you would like to take part in an interview, please contact the author by email on j.lopezblanco.19@unimail.winchester.ac.uk

José López Blanco,
Doctor of Education candidate,
University of Winchester &
Faculty Librarian,
University of South Wales

The Sybil Campbell Collection is seeking a new home

The Sybil Campbell Collection, currently on long-term loan to Winchester University, is a library of some 214m of shelfspace (largely books, and some archival material) which started life as the library of Crosby Hall, a residence for academic women from home and overseas in London, open from 1927-1988.

The collection is currently seeking a new home from February 2023, when Winchester University will return the Sybil Campbell Collection to the trustees, as they are now unable to provide the appropriate facilities and environment for the collection.

If you think you might be able to house the collection, or know someone who might, please contact Alys Blakeway, trustee of the Sybil Campbell Collection, at alys_blakeway@yahoo.co.uk

⁷ Spencer, S., 2013. Just a book in a library? The Sybil Campbell Library Collection fostering international friendship amongst graduate women. *History of Education*, 42, (2), 257-274.

⁸ Staley, D.J. (2013) *Computers, Visualization, and History: How New Technology Will Transform Our Understanding of the Past*. 2nd Edn. London: Routledge

Conference Reports

CILIP Conference 2022



Figure One: The CILIP Conference at the Liverpool Exhibition Centre.

I am pretty new to the world of libraries. I have worked as Library Assistant at Magdalen College Library in Oxford since Spring 2021, having previously volunteered in an Oxford research library. I am also still working to complete my doctoral thesis in late medieval book history. So, though I know a lot about historic library spaces and special collections, I don't know a lot of library professionals, and I am still learning about the key issues concerning libraries and information resources. This is why I applied for and was delighted to receive a bursary from LIHG to attend the CILIP Conference in Liverpool back in July.

With the focus of the conference on sustainability, there were discussions aplenty around a new green manifesto for libraries and securing a future for particularly public library provision. However, two keynotes stand out as inspiring moments of the programme. Sayf Al Ashqar is Secretary-General of Libraries at the University of Mosul. When ISIS entered Mosul in 2014 they specifically targeted the central university library, destroying and burning book stock and causing significant damage to the building. His speech, outlining both the scale of the destruction and the international collaboration required to rebuild and restock the library, reminded me of Richard Ovenden's recent book, *Burning the Books*. One could see it as dispiriting that history keeps repeating itself, but as Edmund Burke apparently didn't say, 'All it takes to evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing'. Al Ashqar's speech was an inspiring reminder of both the precarity of knowledge and the capacity of librarians to do immense good.

The other keynote to mention is that given by Professor Jacqueline McGlade from UCL. Her speech, fitting well into the theme of sustainable libraries, covered themes around the climate emergency, and the importance of storytelling to change the behaviour of the individual. She identified the ways that big data sets identified the anxiety, fear, and hope that was generated by the COVID pandemic, and the knock-on effect it has had on other major events and campaigns, such as Black Lives Matter. I left her speech filled with questions that we should all be asking ourselves, about how we can help to tell the stories that can support a sustainable future, both for libraries and the planet. I must

also give special mention to Alex Kither, my fellow LIHG delegate, who spoke eloquently on the conference stage about his experience of career development, and the support he has received from CILIP.

From such big and philosophical questions, I was also delighted to spend a lot of time working on the LIHG exhibition stand. As well as handing out very smart LIHG cotton bags, which proved extremely popular, I had the chance to talk to lots of librarians and information professionals about their own work, to answer questions about the LIHG, and to share my own experiences working at an Oxford college. It was particularly gratifying to discover delegates' interest in the history of librarianship, regardless of the library setting they work in. It turns out, library folk are interested in our collective history, identifying their role in libraries and information management as part of a shared history of systems, practices, and people.



Figure Two: Liverpool Central Library, photo by Suicasmo. CC-BY-SA-4.0.

As a postscript, I must also mention my parting experience of Liverpool. Having discussed with a friendly bus driver the reason for my trip to Liverpool, he insisted that I should visit Liverpool Central Library while I was in town. If you've never had the chance to go, I would highly recommend it. It is the most extraordinary melding of a historic

library space with a modern circulating library and study resources. What looked like a concert venue has been converted into an incredible children's library, and the Picton, Oake, and Hornby rooms contain special collections, exhibition space, and study resources in historic rooms that sit cheek by jowl with modern library spaces of light and glass. The people of Liverpool are lucky to have it.

Overall it was an inspiring conference, filled with conversations with new acquaintances, in an amazing city. Many thanks to LIHG for giving me the opportunity.

Kathryn Peak,
Library Assistant,
Magdalen College Library
& Doctoral candidate,
St. Cross College, Oxford

LIHG Conference 2022

'Space and Sociability in Library & Information History'

The CILIP LIHG Conference 2022 was held online on Saturday 2nd July. The theme was 'Space and Sociability in Library & Information History'.

The keynote talk was given by Prof. Katie Halsey (University of Sterling) who spoke on the subject of the Leighton Library and Chambers Circulating Library, 1815-1830. Dr. Halsey's talk illustrated how borrower's registers can provide an important insight into the role of libraries as social spaces, and the social connections between borrowers and their books.

Prof. Halsey's keynote was followed by the first panel, on the subject of identity and community in library history. Katie Learmont presented a paper on the history of modern and contemporary library design, from Carnegie Libraries of the late 19th century through to brutalist buildings of the post-war period and into the 21st century. The talk questioned the purpose of design, and the role of interior and exterior library design in creating space that were practical, accessible, flexible and reflected the social requirements of the time they were built in.

Second in this first panel was a talk from Dr. Michelle Johansen (Bishopsgate Institute) which focused on the social lives of male library staff in the early 20th century. Dr. Johansen focused her talk on a number of social organisations, such as the Society of Public Librarian (SPL), The Pseudonyms and Library Assistants Association (LAA), and examined the extent of their social roles, from annual dinners to football games. Both talks illustrated the social lives of libraries, their buildings and their staff.

The second panel was on the theme of reimagining spaces, and opened with a talk from Edwina Page on the booklist of an 18th century library at Ward Castle, Country Down. Though the original building that the library was in has since been demolished, Page's research examines the surviving book list from the library to question how books were kept, stored and managed in this early Irish country house. This study of the Ward Castle booklist also opens up wider questions about collection in small 'big houses' in Ireland during the 17th and 18th centuries. Page's research has identified remaining book which remain on the shelves at the present Ward Castle, and uses the evidence within these collections to develop a broader picture of the original library, its contents and

its purpose. This talk highlighted the importance of sources such as book lists in gaining some knowledge of the spaces and collections that have since been demolished or dispersed, yet still survive in print. An article on the subject of this talk is forthcoming in the next issue of the *Journal of Library and Information History*.

The final talk, presented by Thomas Kohlwein, focused on the complex history of the University Library in Vienna, and charted the institution's relationship with its users and other international collections. The modern library, which opened in 1884, presented itself as a place of research for those beyond the University - inviting women and non-academic readers from early on. Kohlwein also illustrated how, through evidence of Inter Library Loans, connections with international libraries can be charted up until the outbreak of the first world war. Again, user figures, acquisition and loan records paint a picture of how these functions of the library changed during both the first world war, and later the civil war in 1934. As in Page's talk, Kohlwein emphasised the importance of data that can be gathered from users and collections development to gain a richer understanding of how libraries historically operated.

Library in Focus:

Thomas Plume's Library

Maldon's Hidden Treasure



Figure One: Interior of Thomas Plume's Library.

As I walked up the spiral staircase of St. Peter's church in Maldon, Essex for the first time in July 2021, I knew I would love Thomas Plume's Library. Little did I know, I would be so enthused, that I would visit for work experience every month thereafter. Thomas Plume's Library is a special collection library housed in the church of St. Peter, a former medieval church in Maldon. The town is very proud of the library, bequeathed to Maldon by Plume, when he died in 1704.

Thomas Plume was a seventeenth-century clergyman, with an avid interest in book collecting. Born in Maldon in 1630, Plume attended the grammar school in nearby Chelmsford before graduating from Cambridge in 1649. Plume ascended to become Vicar of Greenwich and

Archdeacon of Rochester, positions he held until his death. During this period, Plume's book obsession emerged. Living in Greenwich, Plume had great access to book stalls and auctions around Fleet Street and St. Paul's. This gave him the opportunity to build up a substantial collection of approximately 8,100 books and pamphlets, from the late fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Clergyman Plume did not restrict his reading to theology; he also read widely in history, geography, astrology, astronomy, science, philosophy, politics and literature. Plume intended not only clergy but also for the gentry and scholars of Maldon to use his collection after his death. Wine casks transported his collection from his Greenwich and Rochester residencies to Maldon. On arrival, the Master of Maldon Grammar School was tasked with putting the books on

the shelves. Unlike Plume's contemporary book collector, Samuel Pepys, who arranged his books in height order, Plume was not particular about how his books were shelved. Maybe due to time restrictions, the books were not ordered systematically but placed on the shelves where they best fit.

To this day, Plume's books remain broadly in their original positions on the shelves. Regrettably, of the c.8,1000 books bequeathed to Maldon, c.700 have subsequently been lost. The majority of losses occurred in the early twentieth century when the collection was not directly supervised by the librarian, a local vicar. Library visitors simply collected the key from the vicarage then had the library at their disposal. Consequently, in the 1980s, the Friends of Thomas Plume's Library was formed, with the aim of raising money to buy replacements, or repurchase original books. Impressively, 249 books have been replaced. I was lucky to get the chance to search an online auction for missing books. To my delight, I discovered Claude Perrault's *Memoirs for a Natural History of Animals* (1688), which has now been purchased by the Friends. I am pleased to have contributed to the ongoing book hunt.

No two days at Thomas Plume's Library are alike. Before my first visit, I knew nothing about special collection libraries. Like most people, I expected to wear gloves to handle old books. I now know that this might do the pages more damage. I am now familiar with some of the methods used to preserve fragile books, such as the use of book shoes. On an average work experience day, I may be tasked with retrieving items for reader enquiries. These typically come from scholars investigating the seventeenth century, book collecting or local history. My favourite part of

this task is checking the requested books for exciting ownership marks, scholia and doodles. Restricted by time, librarians cannot search each book for hidden material, therefore locating books for reader enquiries provides the ideal opportunity to do some exploring. The most exciting thing I found was a drawing of a witch being hung, complete with the name 'Sara Richardes'. Any newly discovered details are added to the online catalogue.

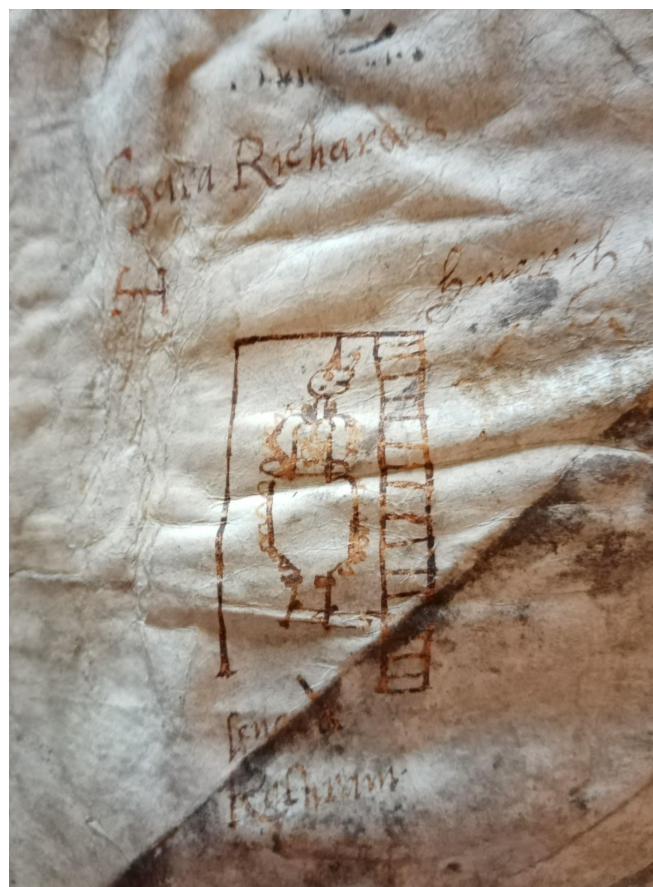


Figure 2: Doodle inside vellum cover of Richard Barnerd, *The Faithfull Shepherd amended and enlarged* (1604)

Since the mid-twentieth century, Plume's Library has not been a lending library. However, it is open to visiting scholars and the public on designated days. Another aspect of my work experience involves showing visitors around the library. I soon established that most visitors have a limited repertoire of

questions, a couple of which I too asked on my first visit. The most common questions are: what is the most expensive book, what is the oldest book and are there any books bound in human skin? It is hard to put a price on many of the books, but the earliest book in Plume's collection is a four-volume Latin bible, published in Nuremberg in 1487. In terms of bindings, no books are bound in human skin. Instead, most of Plume's books are plainly bound in calf leather, absent of gilded lettering. This suggests that Plume was more concerned with preserving his books for minimal cost, rather than making them look grand on the shelves.

Another activity I enjoy is assisting with the local high school visits, particularly showing the students the witch's mark, scratched into one of the seventeenth-century door panels, which were added when the building was extended during the nineteenth century. Witches' marks were drawn or scratched into

buildings with the aim of warding off witches throughout the early modern period. School visits are especially significant to Plume's Library because Plume purposely converted the church, so that the ground floor could accommodate Maldon Grammar School whilst the first floor could house his books.

Thomas Plume was a humble gentleman, who cared deeply about the enrichment of his hometown. In his will, Plume demanded that his portrait never 'be brought into my library'. Instead, his portrait hangs in the Maldon Moot Hall. Nevertheless, the 1844 Library Rules, which still hang on the library wall, includes a miniature of Plume's portrait. Volunteering at Plume's Library has made me determined to become a librarian of a special collection.

Isobel Renn,
Volunteer Library Assistant,
Thomas Plume's Library

James Ollé Awards

James G. Ollé (1916-2001) was an active teacher and distinguished writer in the field of library history; the Library and Information History Group has offered awards in his memory since 2002 with the intention of encouraging a high level of activity in library and information history. Individuals may apply for an award of up to £500 each year for expenses relating to a library history project.

Please note that the award is not intended to support conference attendance.

James Ollé Award recipients will be asked to write a report (maximum 1000 words) of the work undertaken for inclusion in the LIHG's Newsletter, and may be invited to present a short paper at an LIHG conference or meeting, such as the AGM.

To apply for the award, please send a short CV, statement of plans and draft budget to the LIHG's Awards Manager. Applications may be made throughout the year.

Dr Dorothy Clayton, Awards Manager, LIHG

Tel: 0161 826 3883; or 07769658649; Email: dorothy.clayton@manchester.ac.uk

Deadline Extended for Library History Essay Award 2022

The Library History Essay Award is an annual prize for the best article or chapter on library history published in, or pertaining to, the British Isles, within the previous calendar year. Introduced in 1996, the award is organized and sponsored by the LIHG and aims to support the publication of research into library history in the British Isles.

The prize is £350.

Submissions should contain original historical research and be based on original source materials if possible. Evidence of methodological and historiographical innovation is particularly welcome.

Authors may put themselves forward for the prize but may make only one submission per year. Any member of CILIP may also nominate a published essay for consideration.

The entries will be identified and judged by a panel of three:

- Chair of the LIHG
- Awards Manager of the LIHG
- External Assessor at the invitation of the LIHG Committee

Nominations (and any queries relating to the award) should be sent to the Group's Awards Manager:

Dr Dorothy Clayton, Awards Manager, LIHG

Tel: 0161 826 3883; or 07769658649; Email: dorothy.clayton@manchester.ac.uk

Deadline for submissions has been extended to 31 December 2022

LIHG Committee Vacancies

The CILIP Library and Information History Group is looking to appoint two roles to the committee:

Conference Organiser

The conference organiser is responsible for the Group's annual one-day conference (previously in person, latterly online).

Website Editor

The Website Editor ensures that the Group's website is accurate and updated regularly to reflect the Group's business and activities.

To apply, please send a one-page CV and short paragraph outlining your interest in the role to Jill Dye (Chair) at j.dye@nms.ac.uk, by 1pm on **Wednesday 23rd November**.

Research in Progress

Exploring the history of collections through marginalia



In the last thirty years marginalia, defined as readers' interventions on a manuscript or printed text, have been the focus of several studies from different angles. Probably the most influential of these has been

Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's "Studied For Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy". Studying marginalia written by notable readers has been one of the most common ways of investigating readers' habits and is extremely illuminating of personal ideas developed through reading practices. Taking into consideration only one specific annotator (and their books) is also a good starting point to explore the history of a specific collection or a specific library. When, using palaeography, the researcher recognises one annotator's hand it is possible to reconstruct that reader's library and their interests. On the other hand, considering only one annotator doesn't take into consideration the life that books and collections had before and after that annotator.

Such limitations disappear if we decide to start from another perspective, choosing to consider firstly the annotated book and only later other aspects, such as genre and the annotator's identity. My doctoral project, which focuses on readers in Scotland between 1450 and 1560 takes this approach. It examines books printed in this timeframe, and it explores collections in Scottish university libraries, the National Library of Scotland, the Signet Library and Innerpefferay Library.

The research started by reading Durkan and Ross's Early Scottish Libraries, a resource that remains one of the most important for studying library history and the circulation of books in Scotland. More books have been added to the research through the study of library catalogues and other secondary literature. Following Durkan and Ross's example, I decide to take into consideration all books with marginalia, with no preference for genres or readers. Deciding to use this method allowed me to explore books that previous studies have tended to overlook.

In this brief article, in which I set out some early findings of my thesis, I will explore how marginalia can be a key resource for understanding the history of specific libraries and their collections.

Private collections in University libraries

Donations from private owners to public libraries have been a common occurrence in the past two centuries. During the early modern period the donation of books to libraries started becoming an important step for the strengthening of the Scottish Universities, specifically in Aberdeen, St Andrews and Edinburgh. There are at least three interesting examples of book collections that ended up in University collections for the use of future students.

One of the earliest of these collections is at St Andrews University Library. The books' owner was William Scheves (?-1498); he studied in St Andrews and was a Master there in 1460. He was also a student in Louvain and worked at James III's court before becoming

Archbishop of St Andrews in 1478. He had some political difficulties under the reign of James IV; he liaised with Rome to strengthen St Andrews position and, therefore, he travelled to and from the papal city. His presence was recorded in Louvain and Paris, and he probably acquired most of his printed books during these travels. He died in 1498, and he was regarded as an excellent scholar, physician and administrator. After his death, his library was dispersed. In St Andrews University Library today, there are now thirteen volumes, of which four are annotated.

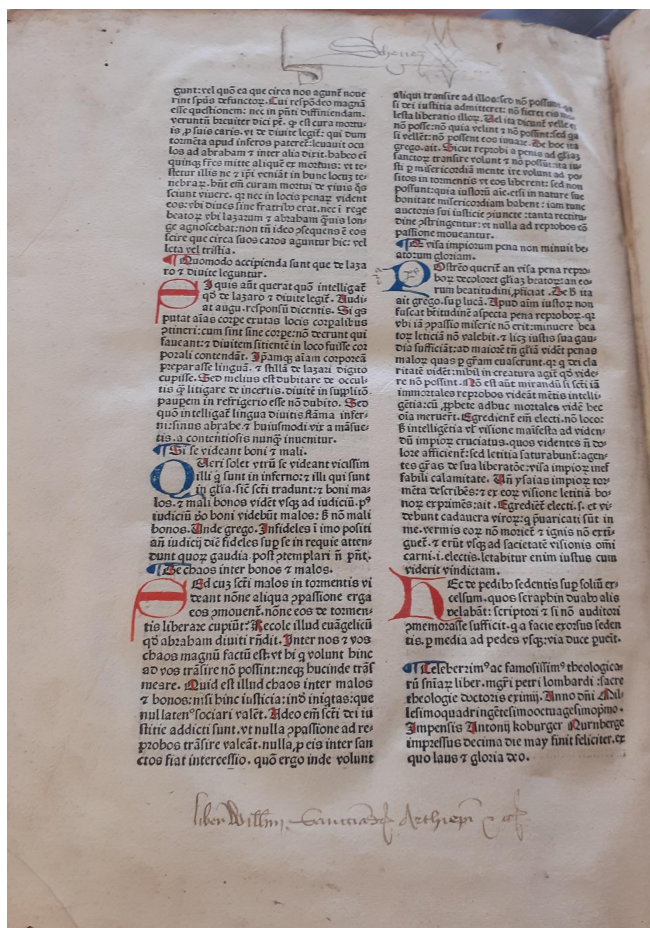


Figure 1: The "Scheves" Signature (TypGN.A81KP) 'Incipit Sententiarum liber prim[us] de misterio trinitatis' [Nuremberg, 1481]. St Andrews University Library.

Scheves's hand is the main one that annotates his books even though there are other readers/annotators in other

contemporary books at St Andrews University Library. His reading habits are quite similar to the habits we'll see further down. He prefers short summary notes in specific sectors; rarely the annotations are a bit longer. The annotated books are related to his career as an Archbishop and administrator: the topics focus on theology and law. Other books that were in his library were acquired outside Scotland, pointing towards a second-hand book market. This shows that Scheves's collection was not given to the University in full. Scheves' library was a private collection and when he died the donation and acquisition were managed as private property.

The one illustrated above was not the only attitude towards privately owned books. William Elphinstone (1431-1514) decided to donate his library to the newly founded University of Aberdeen. This collection shows Elphinstone interests and perfectly reflects the curriculum that he had in mind when founding the University. Elphinstone's library not only shows what topics he focused on during his career, but it also shows how printed books entered, slowly but steadily, the library collections of Scotland. Elphinstone's collection is made of twenty-eight books, of which six are printed and annotated. It is important to remember that, at this point, in Scotland there wasn't a working print-press, and all printed books needed to be imported. The fact that in his collections there are both manuscripts and printed books shows that his main preoccupation was to collect specific texts; the format, in this moment, was not as important. Such a way of collecting books is typical of the early-modern period.

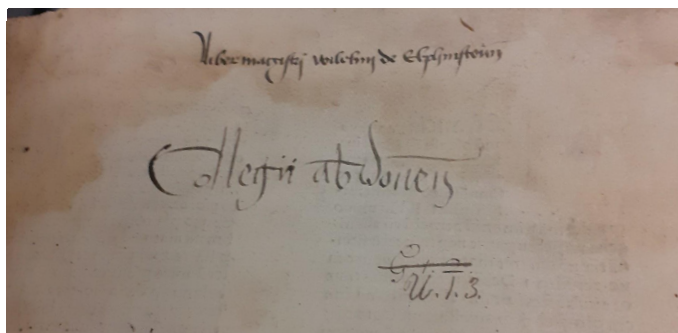


Figure 2: Ownership passage from Elphinstone to Aberdeen University. Inc. 43. Aberdeen University Library.

Another aspect that we can investigate through marginalia is the shared use of books: in this case we can notice that Elphinstone's books were used by him and, in some cases, by a hand that is highly likely to be by Hector Boece (1465-1531). The marginalia by both engage with the printed text but don't converse between them. Such ways of using books testify that reading, at this point in time, was a solitary action for both of them. Furthermore, the fact that in Elphinstone's personal books there aren't any other marginalia by other hands (except the one cited above) shows that his books were probably considered shared property by the students that used the library. It is also likely that, considering Elphinstone's prominence in Aberdeen, his collection was already seen as something to be preserved, and not to be used and annotated carelessly.

Another important university library collection that started with a donation can be found at Edinburgh University Library. The collection donated by Clement Litill (1527?-1580) in 1580 is composed of 276 volumes. Clement Litill, son of an Edinburgh merchant, studied in St Andrews and Louvain and after his studies started practising law in Edinburgh around 1550. He was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates in 1553 and during his career he was close to bishops and prelates. Considering his studies and interests, his library

was unsurprisingly made of both law and theology. The two parts of his collection were separated. The theology texts were donated to Edinburgh University Library in 1580, while the legal texts were sold separately. Compared to Scheves's and Elphinstone's collections we can notice that printed items outnumber the manuscripts. By this point, print culture had fully entered Scotland and printed books were part of educated people's lives.

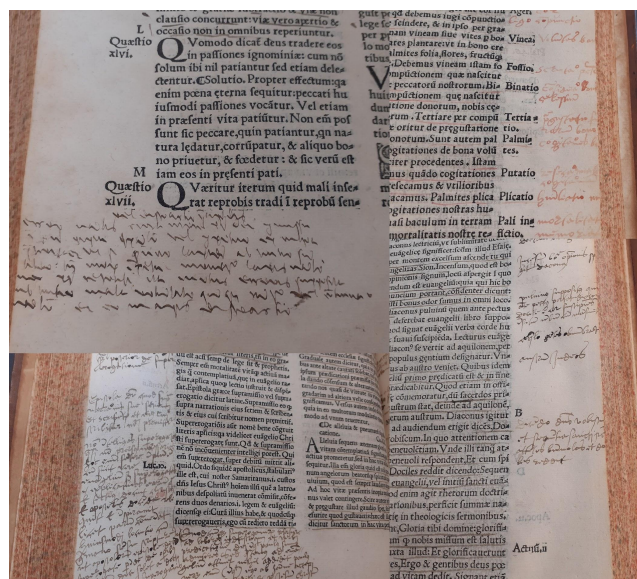


Figure 3: Several hands in one of the books in Litill's Collection. Dd.3.13-15 Edinburgh University Library.

Clement Litill's collection in Edinburgh University is strongly focused on theology and grammar and some of its volumes reveal a lively use of the books. In contrast to Elphinstone's and Scheves's collections the majority of marginalia that we find in Litill's books are not by him but by other readers, most of them anonymous. In one specific instance there is a reader who annotates at least two books and his script could be contemporary or slightly later. In the first case, it would mean that Litill loaned some books to a specific reader, therefore it was acceptable to annotate someone else's book, at least in Litill's circle. If the hand is

slightly later, the annotator could have been a student who was comfortable annotating Edinburgh University library's books. This last hypothesis could be offered to explain most marginalia that we find in Litill's collection; the majority of the marginalia are written by anonymous readers who don't record their ownership of the book at the beginning or at the end of the items. The hands that write text portions that are long enough to allow us to distinguish one from another, are more than twenty. Such a large number, in a relatively small collection point towards a likely library use, more than a widely shared private collection.

Marginalia and History of Libraries

The three collections described above show us how marginalia help us in clarifying several aspects of the history of libraries. Recognising previous owners in a large collection allows us to reconstruct its history. This is particularly important in large libraries, where collections are often stratified and where manuscripts and printed books were divided by librarians in the 19th and 20th centuries. As we saw above, manuscripts and printed books were put together by early-modern collectors, and were annotated in a similar way. Recognising hands in both manuscripts and printed books give us a better idea of how books were seen by contemporary users.

The second, important, aspect, is how books were used once they entered a shared library. In this case, it is not appropriate to use the term "public" library. In the early-modern period reading is still an activity partially restricted to some parts of society, even though there are shared books, as we saw. Above, we saw that Elphinstone's and Scheves' books were used by them, and, in Elphinstone's case, probably by a close friend, Hector Boece. On the other hand,

Clement Littill's books were used before and after they were donated to Edinburgh University library. These different ways of using books tell us something important regarding the attitudes of other readers towards previously owned books and how they perceive libraries. Elphinstone and Scheves were kept in high regard during their lifetime; therefore probably there was a certain level of reverence towards their books, and annotating them might have been seen as inappropriate. Clement Litill was also known in Edinburgh, but he did not have roles such as Elphinstone or Scheves and the books were bequeathed several decades later than the other two collections. There is a change in attitudes towards the use of such books: as said above, Litill's books are annotated by more readers/annotators. This change is probably due both to Litill's different status and change of circumstances. Litill, not being as prominent, was probably not looked at with the same deference. The circumstances I refer to are linked to a larger literacy: a larger number of students makes it more difficult to practice control on a University Library. Furthermore, the period that goes from the invention of print to the end of the 16th century sees a constant increase in printed books. This might have influenced readers in considering books as easily accessible and replaceable. At the same time, though, there isn't a well-developed idea of "public library", therefore annotating "library books" was not seen as forbidden, yet.

Francesca Pontini
SGSAH Funded PhD Candidate
University of Stirling

Notices

Events

History of Libraries Seminar

6 December 2022, 5:30PM - 7:30PM

Dr Keith A. Manley (Institute of Historical Research), **Bodies in Libraries as Viewed by Agatha Christie and 'Golden Age' Detective Writers**

The name of Agatha Christie is synonymous with the discovery of dead bodies in libraries, usually in country houses. This paper will consider death amidst the books in Agatha's novels and her own upbringing amongst books. But Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple will share the limelight with other 'Golden Age' sleuths of the 1920s and 1930s, with guest appearances from Lord Peter Wimsey, Inspector John Appleby, and others. All of them appreciated libraries, and murder of course; not for the faint-hearted.

Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

Attendance is free but please [book in advance](#).

If you wish to advertise your exhibitions or events in the LIHG newsletter, please contact the editor at lihgnewsletter@gmail.com.

Publications

Speaking Volumes: Books with Histories

by David Pearson

Generously illustrated with examples from the early Middle Ages to the present day, *Speaking Volumes* presents a fascinating selection of books in both public and private collections whose individual histories tell surprising and illuminating stories. It encourages us to look at and appreciate books differently, to consider their marks and signs of use as an addition to the original book, to inspire a culture where people don't 'have to be poets, or kings, or celebrities of any kind in order for protection to be extended to the many ways, over many centuries, in which people have given their books a history.'

Bodleian Libraries Publishing, £40.00

'An Extensive Musical Library': Mrs Clarinda Webster

by Karen A. McAulay

The late Victorian Clarinda Augusta Webster ran a music school and a school for young ladies. She escaped domestic violence, overcame personal tragedy, and created a highly successful career first in Aberdeen and then in London. She also conducted a ground-breaking survey on music library provision in late nineteenth century Britain, delivering her findings to the Library Association. Although her report has not been traced in its entirety, many of its findings were reported in newspapers, enabling us to piece together the result of her investigations. This article demonstrates the perceived importance of music in wider late Victorian life.

LRAM, in *Brio* Vol.59 no.1, 29-42.

Back Matter

The LIHG newsletter is produced twice a year. It contains short articles, news items, exhibition and conference announcements, notices of awards and bursaries, and reports on conferences, exhibitions, and site visits. We also highlight a selection of new publications. We are always looking for feature articles in the field of library and information history; descriptions of little-known historic libraries; information about projects with a significant historical component; new resources (print and digital); news items; and calls for papers.

We also welcome reports on conferences on any subject in library and information history and reviews of exhibitions. Recent graduates are invited to submit brief descriptions of their research projects. Please contact the editor, Alex Kither, if you would like to have news, events, exhibitions or calls for papers included in the newsletter: lihgnewsletter@gmail.com

Proposals for feature articles (length of article max. 2000 words) and descriptions of graduate research projects (max. length 750 words) should be accompanied by a short CV. Deadlines for contributions:

5 May 2023 (Summer 2023)
13 October 2023 (Winter 2023)

Information about events, conferences and bursaries is also disseminated via the CILIP website:
www.cilip.org.uk/about/special-interest-groups/library-information-history-group

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