

THE SCHOLAR AND  
THE DATABASE

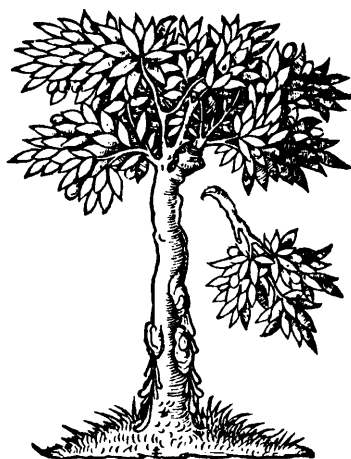


CERL PAPERS • II

# The Scholar & The Database

Papers presented on 4 November 1999  
at the CERL conference hosted by  
the Royal Library, Brussels

EDITED BY  
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# Introduction

LOTTE HELLINGA

Setting up an international retrospective bibliographical database is one thing, persuading scholars to use it quite another. Well aware of the hurdles in communication with the public-at-large for whose benefit the mass of information accumulated in the database is ultimately intended, the Consortium of European Research Libraries considers that not the least of its tasks is to encourage contact between those who create the database and its potential users. One way is to organise seminars and small conferences where those who create the files and those who might use them can meet and exchange experiences. The present publication of a selection of the papers given at one such meeting is intended to serve the same purpose, of making the Consortium and its database better known.

The Hand Press Book (HPB) database is the result of a joint initiative and very willing cooperation of libraries, primarily in European countries. Although the Consortium is an entirely independent organisation, its existence and its activities have become known through formal library organizations as well as more informal contacts, national as well as international. For those closely working with the Consortium this may have seemed an all too gradual process. In reality, recognition of its presence in the library world has been achieved within a timespan of some ten years, in keeping with the steady expansion of the database. Compared with spreading awareness of the existence of a potentially important research tool among the academic public, raising the Consortium's profile among librarians is undoubtedly the lesser task.

Disappointment or discouragement in what can be perceived as lack of alacrity in the adoption of the HPB database by book-historians would, however, be misplaced. It has been the experience of other, now well-established retrospective databases (e.g. ESTC, ISTC) that it takes considerable time before their impact on scholarship, now undeniable, is felt. Once they have arrived at a degree of comprehensiveness and reliability, as ESTC and

ISTC have, and can claim to provide an overall survey of what survives of a defined period or area of printing, their influence is such that they change the methodology of research in the areas they cover.

The Hand Press Book database is still quite far off from the state of comprehensive coverage of these earlier ventures, whereas the areas it covers, all European (or better: 'Western') printing in the four centuries between c.1450 and the middle of the nineteenth century, is much wider and less specialised than either ISTC or ESTC – although any recording of 'hand-press books' requires some specialised treatment. Nevertheless, it is not too early for initiating dialogues with the HPB's potential users, and beginning discussions about the methodology of using and interpreting the flood of data from diverse sources that is already becoming available. Dialogues with users and their recommendations must influence the priorities we set in improving the functionality of the database.

Nothing is as effective as the lure of debate to command the interest of the scholarly community. With that in mind the Consortium invited a panel of speakers to a one-day conference held at the Royal Library in Brussels on 4 November 1999, to precede its Annual General meeting on the following day. In view of the venue it was thought appropriate to invite papers in French as well as in English. In all, fifteen speakers from eleven countries accepted our invitation.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Professor Henri-Jean Martin very kindly delighted us all with an impromptu presentation, 'Souvenirs d'un dinosaure', based on his long experience in the interpretation of bibliographical data for the benefit of 'l'histoire du livre', the new discipline that originated with his early work and to which he has contributed more than anyone else.

When we invited speakers we singled out one theme from the many factors that may affect the interpretation of data. In the context of the database in its entirety we chose 'problems of quantification' as a topic that had been the subject of recent discussion and even some controversy among historians, both in France and in the English-speaking world. The discussion in France focused on the question of what historical conclusions can be drawn from the data made accessible through the automated cataloguing of one large collection (that of the Bibliothèque nationale de France).<sup>2</sup> A similar discussion was taking place in the English-speaking world, in the first place in connection with the History of the Book projects, respectively in Britain and in America. Two of their editors, Hugh Amory and the late Don F. McKenzie, had queried and even challenged the value to be attached to statistical presentation and its relevance to what, in Dr Amory's words,



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'we may faintly perceive as reality', even when derived from such elaborate surveys of surviving material as offered by the ESTC and the North American Imprints Program.<sup>3</sup>

While such discussions had been the inspiration for setting a theme, it turned out that most speakers wished to extend their arguments to cover a much wider range of aspects of the database and its development and use. Speakers did not feel confined to a narrow discussion. Indeed, instead of embattled controversy there appeared to be a consensus, perhaps surprising and certainly encouraging, that further application and refinement of the data may be foreseen. There was even a remarkable coincidence in the recommendations on the directions to take in further development.

Dr Amory's elegant and by no means negatively expressed cautionary introduction warned against all too facile interpretation of records assembled in bibliographies conceived on varying principles instead of addressing the historical context of the material recorded in them. Bibliographies may be invoked to answer questions they were never designed to answer, 'imposing territorial and cultural inclusions and exclusions that were alien to their periods', (a point also noted by Hollender and McKitterick). After demonstrating a number of examples of misinterpretation and the distortion it may cause, Amory concluded, however, with several suggestions for changes in format and cataloguing practice that would make bibliographical records better suited for providing the information sought by historians of the book.

Amory's warnings pervade in one form or other most of the other papers. The same tone of caution was expressed by Professor Martin, whose 'souvenirs' included the elaborate preparatory work, carried out in the 1960s, without the help of computers, for the statistics for his *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle* (1969). Although the book was very successful, the statistics had a very mixed reception, and were even dropped in the translation into English. Martin warned against self-deception in producing statistics, against anticipating results suggested by a preliminary outcome based on incomplete material. No library collection is comprehensive, and each collection gives a different view of the history of the period. Moreover, for the assessment of book-production it is necessary to complement what survives in libraries with data from archival documents. Martin pleaded for historical awareness and contextualisation, a broadening of the field that has made the task of the book-historian more difficult. Nevertheless, he concluded, 'je crois qu'on peut le faire [i.e. produce statistics], mais à condition, chaque fois, de penser qu'on doit critiquer sa source, et on doit opérer par des systèmes de confrontation'.

The challenges posited by Amory and Martin were met in the first place by demonstrations of the refinement of methodology and critical elaborations of the data. An evaluation of statistics of book production based on ESTC provides at least a broad outline (Maureen Bell). By uniformly calculating the size of individual items recorded in a database it becomes possible to arrive at more precise comparisons of book-production and book-trade (Meg Ford). Both speakers stressed, therefore, the importance of knowledge of the material beyond that required for creating (and reading) bibliographical records. The imperative of specialist knowledge, and hence the need for book-historians to cooperate in record creation, was also and independently of each other, stressed by Dr López-Vidriero, Dr Hollender and Dr Kašparová, each describing the progress of cataloguing projects in their respective countries, Spain, Poland and the Czech Republic. Dr Patrick Bazin's account of the growth of the collections of the Bibliothèque Municipale in Lyon, and the parallel progress of their cataloguing projects, also drew attention to the only partially explored riches of collections in France now gradually coming within the reach of the large automated projects. The information that only experts can give on content, origin and production history of particular editions will enhance the value of records to specialists as well as non-specialists consulting the database. Such expertise may be a contents analysis, relate to knowledge of local printers and publishers, to production history which should lead to the bibliographical distinction of issues, or to production techniques, for example of illustration. Their papers leave the impression that this more elaborate type of information is very slowly converging as local and specialist projects begin gradually to be absorbed into larger enterprises.

Extending this principle, several speakers stressed the importance of copy-specific information. In order to bring the user closer to an understanding of the dissemination, use and survival of texts and their editions, it is necessary to have information on individual copies (Kašparová, López-Vidriero, Delsaerd). Dr Delsaerd approached this issue from a slightly different angle, arguing that the survival rate of particular editions – and their reprints – especially of ephemera, may be taken as an indicator of their impact and success. The bibliographical record should aim to give an accurate account of surviving copies and their locations, by covering the widest possible range of institutions and collections. It should also be precise enough to be able to distinguish separate issues and reprints.

These were clear and useful statements of *desiderata*, and also an indication that the database should maintain its present structure with every

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record directly connected to the one or more copies present in collections. Not less useful was a different application of information in the data for creating a reference work on printers and publishers derived from the records. Mr Jean-Dominique Mellot described the progress of the creation of the *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle* at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which kept pace with the creation of respective files in the library itself, followed by the network of related libraries. This is in itself the creation of an immensely useful apparatus for the history of printing as well as an authority file, especially for the area best covered by the collection, in this case France. Specifically, Mr Mellot's experience is of great value to an elaboration of database function now undertaken by the Consortium, creating a Thesaurus file of imprints derived from the files in the HPB database and supplemented with external material, and as Mellot noted, invaluable input from experts outside the environment of the libraries. Mr Mellot pointed out, however, that in spite of the early existence of dépôt légal in France, there are surprisingly vast *lacunae* in the collection of the BnF, thus reinforcing the reservations expressed by Amory and Martin about basing general conclusions on material before establishing its limitations. The same phenomenon was also the focus of Dr McKitterick's paper, where he assessed the specific nature of collections in Cambridge libraries by a comparison with other institutions. He demonstrated that the long and complicated history of the formation of collections by individual collectors, inevitably showing bias to collecting areas reflecting cultural preoccupations of their time and place, might distort general conclusions if based on any single collection alone. Dr Hollender raised the same point with regard to the representation in the HPB database of printing in present-day Poland. The records of a large number of German-language books printed in Polish towns now in the collection of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek produce at present a skewed image of Polish book-production. In the long term, however, this same argument is encouraging for the HPB project, which is taking in so many different collections, from so many different areas, with less overlap than had initially been expected.

Yet another scholarly application of the use of the database was presented by Professor Cristina Misiti (University of Viterbo), who used the data for the identification of the prohibited books banned by the Court of the Holy Office, found in 1602 in the possession of booksellers in Rome. She found the HPB database extremely useful for the interpretation and identification of works and their editions of these highly abbreviated archival documents, especially because a database structure is a much more flexible search instru-

ment than any hard-copy publication can be. She noted, not surprisingly, that the Italian *Censimento* of sixteenth-century books, that at the time was not yet publicly available in electronic form, will be a richer source for the identification of works produced in Italy, including more in-depth information than the HPB can offer at present. Nevertheless, she found even at this stage the HPB useful in identifying the 143 items listed in the archival document, 62 of which had imprints in places including Lyon, Basel, Cologne not covered by the Italian national bibliography of the sixteenth century. Professor Misiti's transcription of the document and its very fully documented interpretation has now been published.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the most far-reaching proposal was presented in a paper prepared by Dr Alla V. Ostrovskaya, of the Institute for Studies in Russian Literature (IRLI), and Dr Andrey Massevitch, of the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, both in St Petersburg. They had developed a system of merging bibliographical data and an authority control system for biographical data, having devised a database that has been in use for some time at IRLI which presents biographical data in a structure compatible with UNIMARC / Authorities while adding further data. The immediate application is as a name authority file enriched with a whole complex of data recording any individual's personal relations. When these data are combined with bibliographical records presenting the publishing history of the individual's works, an eminently useful and generous research tool is created, providing in one system a full spectrum of information on the 'written heritage' in the widest sense. Theirs is a very strong argument for using the availability of automated systems for the convergence of specialism.

The recommendations and observations of the speakers seem to argue convincingly that cooperation not only between libraries, but also between those within the library world, who work on the innumerable details that constitute the database, and specialists from a wider academic or scholarly constituency, is essential for creating a research instrument with qualities that cannot be achieved in the large OPAC systems that are becoming available in ever expanding combinations. The Consortium may, therefore, do well to envisage a further task, beyond its more immediate ambitions. Not only should it encourage scholars to use the database. In the longer term the database should also be developing its systems in such a way that in its editorial processes it can channel contributions from academic specialists. The system of feedback between user and database, as mooted by Dr Kašparová and Dr López-Vidriero, may well be developed in the HPB environment to find wider application.

## Introduction

The Consortium is happy to present this skein of experience and proposals, geographically as well as generationally coming from disparate sources. We are very grateful to the speakers who first presented their papers at the conference, and then made them available for publication. Thanks are due to the Royal Library in Brussels (and, in particular, to Mr W. van der Pijpen) for providing an elegant setting for the occasion, and to the St Bride Printing Library, Professor James Mosley, and Justin Howes, for their help and expertise in preparing these papers for the printer.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Elena Domi, of the National Library in Tirana, Albania, could not attend to present her paper on *L'histoire du livre en Albanie ou les collections albanaises*. When on the day itself time ran out, Dr Reimer Eck (Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen) very generously sacrificed the presentation of his paper on *The first century of German language printing in the United States (1728–1830): an international bibliographical project still in progress*.

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, Anette Smedley-Weill, and André Zysberg, 'French book production from 1454: a quantitative analysis', in: *Library History* 15 (1999), pp. 83–98.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Amory, 'A note on statistics'. Appendix One in: Hugh Amory, David Hall (eds.), *A History of the Book in America*, vol. I: The colonial book in the Atlantic World, Cambridge, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> *Rivista Storica del Lazio* 19 (1999).



# Pseudodoxia Bibliographica, or When is a Book not a Book? When it's a Record

HUGH AMORY

Over the last half-century, three traditions have uneasily converged in Anglo-American scholarship, one historical, and two in somewhat different senses, 'bibliographical'. Historically, there is the school of the *Annales*, whose cliometry first impacted in Lefebvre and Martin's *L'apparition du livre* and triumphed in *L'histoire de l'édition française*, the inspiration for so many 'histories of the book', as they have come to be called in the Anglo-Saxon world. The very idiom of 'the book' is French, since, before the coming of Lefebvre, Martin, and Chartier, English had limited this usage of the definite article to animals, musical instruments, and diseases.<sup>1</sup> We hunt the wolf, play the violin, catch the measles, and we shall now, I hope, count the book.

Bibliographically, there is no want of numbers for this purpose, but our bibliographies do not form a coherent series, employing different measures and various categories of the book. Within the great tradition of bibliography espoused by Louise-Noëlle Malclès, I would first note Isaiah Thomas's *History of Printing in America*, published in two volumes, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1810. At his death in 1831, Thomas left a third volume in manuscript, listing all the books and newspapers printed in America to 1775, which was finally edited, enlarged, and appended to the second edition of his history in 1874. He based his list on newspaper advertisements and archival sources, as well as on American imprints, a policy continued by his celebrated successor Charles Evans. Evans, one of a remarkable group of early American book historians who analyzed early catalogues, book lists, inventories, archives, and even book subscription lists, designed his bibliography as a prequel to Orville Roorbach's *Bibliotheca Americana*, our first current national bibliography, covering production

from 1820 to 1849. His *American Bibliography* began to appear in 1903, and was finally completed by Clifford K. Shipton in 1955.

In a rather different tradition, there is Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue* (or STC, 1926) launched by one of the founders of the 'new bibliography', which has renewed its youth in France under the name of *la bibliographie matérielle*. The 'new bibliographers' focused on the brief and usually undocumented transition from manuscript to print, and for this purpose demanded a less ambiguous witness of the existence of the text than an advertisement. One might call their procedure a sort of archeology of the text which, with its emphasis on a careful taxonomy of edition, impression, issue, and state, has many parallels with the methodology of prehistory – say, the sequence of Greek geometric pottery. As such, it is discontinuous with current national bibliographies like Roorbach, which use rather different definitions of an 'edition', exclude ephemera and job printing, and inevitably, with the passage of time, record books that no longer survive. Based solely on located, physical copies, it also does not resemble Evans.

Pollard and Redgrave's catalogue is the prototype for a host of later short-title catalogues, covering what I would like to call 'the English-speaking realm', echoing the title of the *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (better known as VD16). In machine-readable form, Evans has been reshaped to conform with Pollard and Redgrave in the North American Imprints Program, or NAIP for short, which will eventually describe American monographs down to 1876, while the English Short-Title Catalogue or ESTC incorporates Pollard and Redgrave and its continuation by Donald Wing, and, combined with Evans, extends their work down to 1800. I shall refer to all these research tools as 'imprint catalogues'; in general they form a distinct tradition from Evans and from European inventories and repertories.

Indeed the term 'imprint' itself is peculiarly English in its ambiguous complexity. It comprehends both a publisher's imprint or *marque d'éditeur* and a printer's imprint or *achevé d'imprimer*, as well as the editions in which these imprints occur – i.e. an *imprimé* – or even fail to occur. Only in English, I believe, is it possible for an imprint to have no imprint.<sup>2</sup> As originally conceived, the scope of an imprint catalogue was defined by printing, though only the revised edition of Pollard and Redgrave by Jackson, Ferguson, and Pantzer attempts to account for the full extent and complexity of this activity, particularly shared printing. Because of changes in the structure of the British book trade, the data that imprints provide on



printing dwindles with time: the names of printers shrink to initialisms or, by the mid-eighteenth century, are generally omitted. In part because of the rapidly increasing numbers of entries, in part because the necessary data must be retrieved from secondary sources, imprint catalogues rarely identify anonymous printers after 1640, and publishers' imprints increasingly form the surface content of Wing and the eighteenth-century imprints in ESTC.

Nevertheless, any systematic, comprehensive access to the places of publishing is neglected: the index to the revised Wing, for example, fully lists the names of booksellers in its imprints, but not the places where they operated; in ESTC, provincial towns in imprints must be identified by the laborious and aleatory method of keyword searching, unless they form the primary place of publication. Unlike current national bibliographies, too, imprint bibliographies regularly include false and fictitious imprints. These features can distort their usefulness as records of the historical production of print: *Eighteenth-Century British Books*, by F. J. G. Robinson (1981), for example, includes the hundreds of French editions printed in Paris by *permission tacite*, usually with the imprint 'à Londres et se trouve à Paris'.

Peculiar too to Anglophone bibliography is the inclusion of colonial and postcolonial printing in the retrospective national bibliographies of the mother country. I doubt that the time will ever come, for example, when German-American imprints will be considered part of the *deutsche Sprachbereich*; Québec already has its own national library and a separate retrospective bibliography and, despite General de Gaulle's historic gesture of solidarity, its current bibliography will never merge with the *Bibliographie de la France*, I believe; it is perhaps indicative that during a state visit of the late Premier Pierre Trudeau one Parisian interviewer complimented him on his excellent command of French. In stark contrast, one of the creators of the ESTC, the Australian librarian and bibliographer Jim Mitchell, can describe it as a bibliography of 'works printed in British languages or British territories'.<sup>3</sup> These territories still include the United States of America, and these languages number Pennsylvania German, New Netherlands Dutch, New Jersey Swedish, and Québécois, to say nothing of various Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan dialects, though not Latin, whose barbarous British pronunciation was, however, barely comprehensible to other Europeans. The *Nineteenth-Century Short-Title Catalogue* pursues the same policy.

I am not complaining. National bibliographies normally ignore printing and publication outside the national territory, with a predictable distortion of the national heritage, as Lotte Hellinga observed in a recent address to

the Bibliographical Society of America,<sup>4</sup> so that the mixture of British and American imprints is actually a boon for the historian of the colonial American book, who must account for the imports of British books that bulk so large in colonial estate inventories, advertisements, and library catalogues. Edwin Wolf's study of the book culture of colonial Philadelphia indeed ignores colonial printing altogether.<sup>5</sup> American printing was not, of course, meaningless for colonial culture, but its meaning requires an Atlantic context, for the cultural and territorial nations were displaced. Thus, a surprising number of colonial American poets, in an age when Horace was the normal poetical and political model, imitated or translated that classic of exile, Ovid's *Tristia*, and Americans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries have notoriously described their native land as an alien 'wilderness', whose 'frontier' is slowly realizing westward.

Finally, NAIP differs from Evans in its exclusion of serials, a policy also followed in the revised edition of Wing, though serials are separately recorded in a supplementary volume by Carolyn Nelson and Matthew Seccombe. Standard cataloguing rules and library economy now dictate that the issues of a serial should be recorded in groups under their successive titles, whereas, as Nelson and Seccombe point out, we should require a separate entry for every issue, to be consistent with the records of an imprint bibliography. When they are not so analysed, it is often difficult to present their printing history clearly, since the earlier issues of a popular periodical like the *Gentleman's Magazine* will often be reprinted to make up sets, and the imprints of any long-lived periodical like the *Philosophical Transactions* will inevitably vary over time. Curiously enough, however, catalogues that purport to be a complete record of print production exclude or misrepresent precisely the most rapidly growing sector of their subject.<sup>6</sup>

Valuable as these resources are for anyone hoping to identify a particular monograph and its bibliographical context, they were never designed to answer the general questions that are typically posed by book history – to calibrate the relative size of metropolitan and colonial printing, for example, of religious and secular production, or the rise of the novel. The scope of imprint bibliographies is retroactive, imposing territorial and cultural inclusions and exclusions that were alien to their periods. Indeed, even the cataloguing of a database is retroactive, defined by the nature of the question. The numbers that pour forth in such profusion represent a certain number of 'hits', not entries, and the fuller the cataloguing, the higher the number of 'hits'. Only by downloading the entire response and examining it record by record can we arrive at reliable counts. To be sure, a printed

catalogue might have been even less responsive, but the numbers can be very large indeed.

The resulting dialectic of research between the raw and the cooked to some extent justifies me in considering these apparently objective resources rhetorically, as discourses whose grandiloquence disguises an all-too-mute *praeteritio*; discourses that can subtly distort the perceptions of even the most experienced and wariest of bibliographers, as I will instance from a contribution by Nicolas Barker to a recent conference on *L'Europe et le livre*. There Barker notes, I believe from the 1993 CD-Rom version of the ESTC, that there were 27,620 provincial imprints in eighteenth-century England, or about 10% of the total English production (excluding Wales). 'The proportion is soberingly small', he adds, 'compared with the 50,000 titles recorded from the American colonies, later U.S.A., in the same period'.<sup>7</sup> The latter figure represents the roughly 40,000 entries in Evans, and 10,000 'additions' in the supplement of 1959, by Roger P. Bristol.

In this passing remark, Barker raises what I would call a good question in the shape of a bad answer. Evans fashioned his bibliography along very different lines from the ESTC, and many of Bristol's 'additions' are in fact corrections. Mather's *Discourse concerning Faith and Fervency in Prayer*, for example, appeared under the imprints of five different Boston booksellers in 1710, three of them recorded in Evans and two in Bristol. In the volume of printing and numbers of printers for eighteenth-century Boston, these five issues should count as a single title, and Bristol's 'additions' should in no way affect the figure. Bristol also added many blank forms and ephemera that Evans had intentionally excluded, and these favour New England production over that of the Middle Colonies and the South. Since NAIP excludes serials and lost editions, the 50,000 entries recorded in Evans and Bristol, what with one thing and another, boil down to a little over 40,000 – the only precisely comparable figure for the record of provincial imprints in ESTC.<sup>8</sup>

Two factors, I think, should substantially reduce this still inappropriately large American figure. First, the elision of colonial and national production cannot be passed over. More than a third of the 'colonial' imprints in Evans were printed after American Independence, in the last decade of the century, and roughly a thousand imprints appeared before 1700, in a period when the only legal provincial English presses were in York (from 1662) and (briefly) in Bristol (from 1695). Let us allow that colonial cities remained 'British' during the War of Independence, though patriots hated the thought; and that the American state did not really emerge before the

ratification of the Constitution in 1789. This is not the chauvinistic quibbling it might appear. The last decade of the century saw the first introduction into America of type-founding on a commercial scale, the first professional organisations of printers and booksellers, an explosion of printing from the coastal cities into the hinterlands and of paper mills everywhere, the first national copyright act, and generally, a steep increase in the production of newspapers and books, including the first American editions of the Bible in the multiple formats that its commerce required.

For the more appropriate period from 1700 to 1790, then, one might match about 18,620 provincial titles with about 24,394 colonial titles. The colonial figures, moreover, are swollen by the production of local statutes, proclamations, legislative journals, and other government printing – some 6,371 entries, together with the almanacs that every colonial press annually issued, amounting to another 2,083 entries for this period. Nothing of the kind appeared from provincial presses, and if we compare the production of similar kinds of books in either area for this same period, the numbers considerably favour the provinces. For this more appropriate period and production, there were only 15,940 titles printed in colonial towns and cities, and the provincial figure of 18,620 entries is surely a minimum, since such imprints are still underreported in the ESTC and underidentified. The colonial figures might be slightly enlarged by adding production in Canada and the British Caribbean (somewhat over 1,000 titles, mostly almanacs and government printing), but only Mr Barker's indomitable affection for the United States could have made his statistics remotely plausible.

As a calculation of the amount of printing performed in the two areas, of course, none of these figures has any significance. They are only records of 'ideal copies' variously representing editions, issues, or even states, and they convey nothing about the sizes of the items or of their press-runs, circulation, or distribution, as many scholars have noted. The 6,371 colonial government publications might easily have been comprised in from 200 to 250 folio volumes, and almanacs not larger than one or two sheets are not unrepresentative of the numerous sermons and pamphlets that typified the rest of the colonies' production. From 1728 to 1748, there are 460 entries in C. William Miller's standard bibliography of Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia printing (1974); of this total, only 16 contain ten sheets or more. As David Stoker observes, the Boston, Massachusetts, press printed numerically more items than either Oxford or Cambridge University Presses in the first decade of the eighteenth century,<sup>9</sup> but the comparison is meaningless. The three folio volumes of Kuster's *Suidas* alone, published in an edition of

1500 copies by Cambridge in 1705, probably consumed more paper and print than the entire Boston trade from 1701 to 1710.

The figures are somewhat more significant from the standpoint of a publishing record. Nicolas Barker was right to be surprised, but for the wrong reasons. Seen as a record of political activity and the structure of quotidian life, laws and almanacs have a significance entirely incommensurate with their numbers. Boston, Philadelphia, Charleston, and New York ultimately grew up as the capitals of extensive hinterlands, which they controlled by war, treaty, and legislation; they issued not only statutes but paper currency – acts of sovereignty, however mediated by Privy Council approval, that find no counterpart in the history of Bristol, Birmingham, or Manchester. Dublin and Edinburgh provide better parallels for colonial cities than the English provinces, and the colonists in the years leading up to the American Revolution took full advantage of them, pleading that their governors and legislatures were directly subordinate to the British Crown, not to Parliament.

To be sure, it may be unfair to demand that imprint catalogues ‘represent’ anything, even imprints, for whose history they provide no more than raw material. Nor are they really designed for the production of statistics on literary or intellectual history, where, especially in the form of union catalogues, they serve rather as inventories. The primary users of short-title catalogues, it may be argued, are neither historians, analytical bibliographers, nor literary scholars, but acquisition bibliographers, and the origin of the myth that a reference number uniquely represents a book lies in the *folie à deux* of antiquarian booksellers and rare-book librarians. In these circles, the highest form of praise and a major factor in price is the litany of ‘not in Wing’ or ‘not in STC’; rare-book circles rose in arms when Wing presumed to renumber entries in his revision. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for such expensive absences: the book may have been entered under an antiquated, idiosyncratic, or otherwise unexpected heading; the same edition may be concealed under a variant imprint or cancel title-page; variant settings may be recorded under the same entry number; other copies may lurk under attributed imprints, running titles, and similar cataloguing expedients for recording imperfect copies; parts of the book may have become separated, disguising its extent; multiple title-pages and the accidents of binding may scatter copies of an anonymous work widely in the alphabetical sequence – as may the disputed attributions of their authors. The superior bibliographical control of the ESTC has attenuated many of these problems, but the myth lives on in the citation of ESTC numbers by

dealers, as though they had some substantive significance – whereas their sequence encodes nothing but the moment when the record was created. In many ways the ESTC resembles the Holy Roman Empire: it is neither English, Short-Title, nor a Catalogue, since the ‘cataloguing’ is only a response shaped by the system at the user’s request. One of its most useful features, keyword searching, is precisely an index, whose accuracy and exhaustiveness depend on the illogical whims of language.

Not surprisingly, then, the scholars who have tried to quantify the information in imprint catalogues normally begin with a series of caveats. In a splendid article on provincial printing, David Stoker warns that the very collections on which ESTC is based were haphazardly formed and that, even if they were perfectly and completely catalogued, they could not represent a reliable archive of the past. They are no equivalent for the serial documentation of print that began with the regular enforcement of copyright deposit: in 1811, for France, 1842, for England, and 1870, for the United States. For the same reason, the dates of publication that cataloguers have assigned are often uncertain, and ‘any year-by-year comparison’ is distorted, Stoker points out. In short, he concludes, the ‘ESTC was never designed or intended to be used as a statistical tool’, and there is no way to remove its *événementielle* bias, though we can sometimes attenuate it.<sup>10</sup> Again, G. Thomas Tanselle opens his statistical analysis of the printed record of American Independence in Evans as follows: ‘In the first place, [the figures] do not necessarily tell one very much about what was being read in America during these years, or even what was available in bookshops . . . . Second, [they] refer to entries in bibliographies and cannot be taken to represent the total number of items actually printed . . . . Third, statistics based on numbers of entries do not necessarily reflect the amount of printing performed, because they do not take into account either the length of the works printed or the size of the editions.’<sup>11</sup> That about exhausts any questions of any real significance a book historian would wish to address from this data.

The users of ESTC have not always heeded Stoker’s caution, that the real scope of a union catalogue is defined by the holdings of the contributing libraries, in contrast to a bibliography, which lays bare an unseen, inexplicit reality from documents as well as books. In 1985, Jim Mitchell looked forward to the year 2000, when the ESTC would ‘contain most copies in the world of ESTC items held by libraries and institutions’, and he supposed that ‘within half a century’, with the incorporation of copies held by antiquarian booksellers or in private hands, we will ‘know fairly accurately the number of eighteenth-century books which have survived’.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, we

will have better control over the numbers of editions, issues and states, but will the ESTC, as he supposes, ever amount to a census of copies? It was a life-time occupation for Frederick Goff to trace the migrations of some fifty-one thousand incunabula in North America alone, but tracking the multiple copies of over half a million items in real time seems unimaginable to me. And many of the copies presently recorded in the ESTC will probably not survive for half a century, a theme on which Dr Terry Belanger has expanded and annually demonstrates to his students by ripping a book to pieces. Even reliable catalogue records do not insure that a book is on the library shelves, whether it has been lost, stolen, or misshelved. Whole fields of knowledge have been impaired by the destruction of libraries – Harvard College (1764), Strasbourg (1877), New York State, Albany (1911), and Norwich (1992), to name only a few; and deaccessioning will take its toll of ESTC as it has of the pre-1956 *National Union Catalogue*. As Mitchell himself acknowledged only two years later, ‘the concept of a completed ESTC is in many ways a contradiction in terms’.<sup>13</sup> It is not only permanently incomplete, but, for all practical purposes, impossible to freeze into a state suitable for statistical analysis. Even as of 1999, it is no longer easy to obtain copies of the 1993 CD-Rom cited by Barker, and the permanence of this archive and its software over half a century is uncertain.

The counsel of our authorities would be more convincing, moreover, if their spokesmen took their own advice. All of them warn us that a single entry may describe a half-sheet broadside or a multivolume work, that press-runs vary from title to title, and one may add that even when this data is available, which is rarely, printing costs depend on the size of the sheet and the type, and bear little relation to the number of records or titles. Yet Stoker, as we have seen, proceeds to make some of the comparisons he avowedly distrusts, as does Barker, referring to Stoker’s caveats. Tanselle insists that even if the absolute counts signify little in themselves, their ratios may be useful, yet this could only be true if the count were calculated in uniform units, and it isn’t. An Evans number may represent a separate issue of an edition, a year’s cumulation of a periodical, a work issued in parts and bound up, or a single volume of a multivolume work; it can easily represent part of another work, with its own, distinct Evans number. Nor are all these problems necessarily eradicated in the ESTC or NAIP. Thus the Eliot Indian Bible (1661–63), represented by three entries in Evans, receives five records in NAIP, two each for the Indian and English title-pages of the Bible and the New Testament, and one for the metrical psalms; and the imprint generates another two ‘hits’ for the year 1662, in which neither the Old nor the New

Testament was published. The very accessibility of these catalogues distorts their numbers, and the exclusion or cataloguing of serials makes them even less representative of 'the amount of printing performed' than Evans.

The field of the history of the book is also troubled by its interdisciplinary contributors, who arrogate soberly crafted numbers to the intoxicating ends of their specialities. Significantly, the disciplines of the manuscript book are ancillary to history, whereas the disciplines of the printed book are ancillary to literature; the first book being documentary, the second 'textual' – where 'text' can be almost anything, from an intention to an ideal copy. 'Print culture' no longer has much to do with printing, if it ever had, and 'book culture' teeters between unbound sheets and Rolf Engelsing's *Leserevolution*, with little in between. The production of print is often regarded as an index of consumption, in a trade where, as the great eighteenth-century book-seller Andrew Millar noted, only one book in twenty made a profit, and, as Gabriel Naudé advised collectors, editions might linger in warehouses for a century or more. Nor is there any agreement on where a book ends and a pamphlet begins; as the *Oxford English Dictionary* remarks, 'No absolute definition of a 'book' in this sense can be given'. *Le grand Robert* cites Escarpit, who abandons material concerns altogether, and proposes that the nature of a book is defined by how it is read – which only opens up another abyss. Let me give an example.

In the Houghton Library, there is a small-folio English Bible printed in Cambridge, England, 1629, annotated in Latin throughout by John Norton, the eminent minister of First Church, Boston, a figure whom the *Dictionary of American Biography* characterises, temperately enough, as 'bigoted, narrow-minded, and tyrannical'. Educated in Peterhouse, Cambridge, he arrived in New England in 1635, and died in 1663, leaving his library of 729 volumes to his widow Mary, with directions to dispose of it to any of his nephews 'if trained for the ministry'. One of the treasures of this remarkable collection was the first incunable known to have crossed the Atlantic to our shores: St Augustine's *Opuscula plurima* (Venice, 1491, Goff A-1219, bound with Goff A-1222, also Venice, 1491), now in the Boston Public Library. Norton's nephew and namesake John, second minister of Hingham, Massachusetts, Harvard AB 1671, evidently got the Bible, because *his* grandson Captain John Norton, who died at sea in 1750, or perhaps the Captain's wife Anna Belknap, have entered their family records in it. We may imagine that their children learned to read from it, ignoring the Latin annotations of their great, great granduncle. Its later history is obscure, but it was rather too small to have served as an herbarium or a fly-



catcher, as larger folios so often did; I imagine that it eventually became lumber that stayed on the family shelves unread, or occasionally was taken down to exhibit a relic of a famous ancestor. Certainly no one today is likely to read it, except for its annotations. All by itself, by Escarpit's definition, it forms five books, four of them American, though the volume was printed in England: an English Bible, STC 2285; the commonplace book of the first John Norton; the family bible of the third John Norton; the nineteenth-century filiopietistic relic; and the early modern Neolatin codex of today. Only the first, needless to say, is recorded in the ESTC.

Escarpit, of course, did not envisage this case, because he was a literary historian, and his interest lay in measuring communication at the moment of publishing. As such, he focused on the corpus of texts recorded in the *Catalogue général* of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and on authors whose anonymity is largely a literary device. These texts do not include the Bible. When the author is God, when reception is drowned out by the reverberations of the Fall, and when the book is the only fully commodified text of the early modern period (at least in the English-speaking realm), the case is different. Now the material embodiment of the book is precisely the index of how it was meant to be read, and there are no intentions, apart from its production and consumption, to confuse the issue. The Cambridge Bible was in folio because that was the only format in which the Stationers' Company permitted the Cambridge Press to print it; as Brian McMullin has shown, it was printed on seven different papers, at prices from 16 to 30 shillings, in order to reach all the sectors of the market that would ordinarily have been denied a folio.<sup>14</sup> The type is a relatively compact and legible roman pica, as opposed to the official great primer black letter, traditional for lectern bibles, laws, and royal proclamations. Those were designed to be read aloud to a congregation, or in the market place, to the sound of a drum; Puritans like Norton rejected the use of the Bible as a lectionary, and read it silently, alone, or aloud to a small family circle. Norton's inexpensive folio, compactly printed on the next to cheapest paper, attests this culture, of the still, small voice.

Finally, many, including Mitchell, have proposed to improve the reliability of our statistics by excluding ephemera, whose survival rate, by definition, is inferior to that of books. If there is any truth in Escarpit's definition, however, as I think there is, we will only be describing a more specialised sector of the market, one, say, of book culture as opposed to print culture. Nor does the exclusion achieve much, unless we can estimate the size of what we have lost. Lawrence C. Wroth, for example, estimated that 4.7

times the number of entries in Evans were lost, to judge by the rather spotty records of jobbing kept by Franklin & Hall; but the first reliable criterion known to me, cited by Simon Eliot, comes from the early twentieth century, when the printing of books was worth only an eighth as much as other printed production.<sup>15</sup> If anything like this proportion held true for the eighteenth century, one might argue that survival itself is a criterion of a book, at least for pieces that are held in libraries; *some* reader, at least, thought that *this* copy was worth preserving, and as such it is not ephemeral. One might then devote one's time to the more profitable task of estimating the number of titles that have been lost – about 10% of American production, I believe, though there is considerable variation from region to region and author to author.<sup>16</sup>

To provide a more meaningful series of data, a number of minor technical devices might be proposed, though library administrators are likely to question their cost benefit. At present, one may record alternative places of publication in what is technically known in the MARC format as the 752 field, but we need a third, distinctive field for false or fictitious places, and the 752 field is all-too-rarely used. One would like to link editions with issues, and issues with states that affect the imprint such as misprinted or variant dates, in a unitary record. At present, cataloguers may only do so when the variant may be considered copy-specific information: candidates of interest for this position are variant grades of paper and press-variant dates, but one would like to link up other kinds of issue or reissue, possibly by hypertext. Again, the history of the book in the English-speaking realm needs a variety of new catalogues: an on-line catalogue of early periodicals that, at a minimum, would provide a count of the true number of issues, including those that have probably been lost; a catalogue of lost editions of monographs, or some standard for incorporating this information in imprint catalogues like the ESTC; and finally, a census of books described in early libraries, that I like to think of as pre-1820 or pre-1830 National Union Catalogues, akin to the work of Dr Elisabeth Leedham-Green on Cambridge inventories.

All too often, historians evade the issue of edition sizes by proposing some average press-run such as 1,250, 1,500, or 2,000 copies – multiples that set an upper limit on our imagination, but afford no greater accuracy than the statistics of titles.<sup>17</sup> I think we can do better than that, drawing on government records and setting typical press-runs for various classes of book, which ranged, in America, from 500 for a sermon to 10,000 or even 50,000 for an almanac. I have offered some attempts of this kind in the

*History of the Book in America*, volume 1, to 1790;<sup>18</sup> they are confined to a few years' production in Boston, Massachusetts, and Williamsburg, Virginia, but in such tiny samples, I believe, lies our greatest hope for improving the accuracy of our statistics in the near future. At a minimum, I would only ask that when the historian draws his sustenance from an imprint catalogue, he should not measure it in books or titles, but in entries; that, at any rate, was the largest concession I was able to wring from my collaborators on the *History of the Book in America*. Such is the appeal of numbers over what we may faintly perceive as reality.

<sup>1</sup> OED (2nd edn.), s.v. 'the', 19. The 'typifying' sense of 'the' (OED 20) might also be adduced, but most native speakers of English, in my experience, overlook it in this phrase; for an early example, cf. J. D. Cowley, *Bibliographical Description and Cataloguing*, London, 1939, p. 5: 'the history of the book is a science'.

<sup>2</sup> The only reference work to make the distinction seems to be the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (22nd edn., 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Jim Mitchell, 'The Spread and Fluctuation of Eighteenth Century Printing', in: *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 230 (1985), p. 306.

<sup>4</sup> Lotte Hellenga, 'A Meditation on the Variety in Scale and Context in the Modern Study of the Early Printed Heritage', in: *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 92 (1998), p. 404.

<sup>5</sup> Edwin Wolf II, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers*, Oxford, 1988.

<sup>6</sup> ESTC includes serials – some 3,000 titles as of 1999, as Henry S. Snyder pointed out in Brussels, correcting my mistaken impression – but the cataloguing, of course, provides an inaccurate statistical measure of their importance.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Barker, 'The Rise of the Provincial Book Trade in England and the Growth of a National Transport System' in: *L'Europe et le livre: réseaux et pratiques du négoce de librairie, XVIe–XIXe siècles*, ed. F. Barbier et al. [Paris], 1996, pp. 137–55.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Russell L. Martin, for this figure – 40,640 records in NAIP, to be precise, as of January 1998.

<sup>9</sup> David Stoker, 'The Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue and Provincial Imprints', in: *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 24 (1995), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Stoker, 'ESTC & Provincial Imprints', p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> G. Thomas Tanselle, 'Some Statistics on American Printing, 1764–1783', in: *The Press & the American Revolution*, ed. Bernard Bailyn & J. B. Hench. Boston, Mass., 1981, pp. 319–20.

<sup>12</sup> Mitchell, 'Spread & Fluctuation', p. 317 n.

<sup>13</sup> C. J. Mitchell, 'Provincial Printing in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in: *Publishing History* 21 (1987), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> B. J. McMullin, 'The 1629 Cambridge Bible', in: *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 8:4 (1984), pp. 381–97.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer*, 2nd edn., rev. & enl. Charlottesville, Va., 1964, p. 216; Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919*. London: Bibliographical Society, 1994, p. 157; and cf. for inconsistencies in twentieth-century national bibliographies, Georg Schneider, *Handbuch der Bibliographie*, 2. unveränderte Aufl. Leipzig, 1924, pp. 65–68.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Pollard in the preface to the first edn. of the STC, estimating that 10% of the titles and about 20% of the issues and editions were not recorded; the latter figure finds some support in the figures of the revised STC, which is about 25% larger than the first edition.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. D. F. McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Practices', in: *Studies in Bibliography* 22 (1969), p. 14, for evidence that such 'norms' can be misleading.

<sup>18</sup> Cambridge, The Cambridge University Press, 1999.

# A Quantitative Survey of British Book Production 1475–1700

MAUREEN BELL

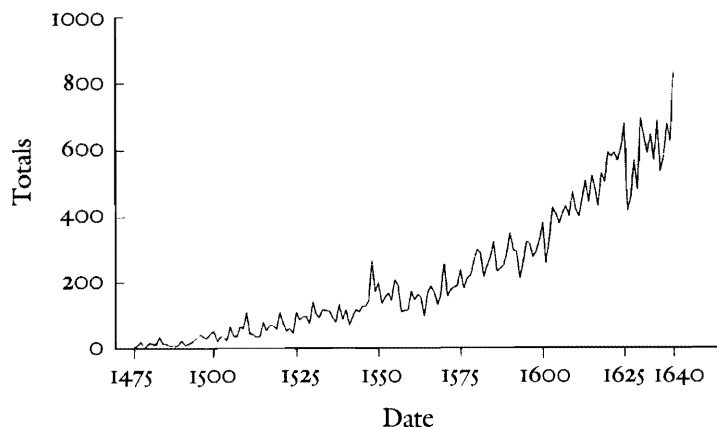
In 1990, supported by funding from the Leverhulme Trust, John Barnard of the University of Leeds and I began the work of quantifying British book production in the early modern period. The quantification project was part of a larger collaborative work, now in process of publication by Cambridge University Press as the multi-volume *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*. The statistics I am about to describe will form part of the ‘Statistical Appendices’ to volume IV, which covers the period 1557 to 1695.

Our attempt at quantification of British book production was possible, of course, only because of the existence of well-established short-title catalogues which would provide the data for the work: Katharine Pantzer’s revision of *A short-title catalogue . . . 1475–1640* (containing records for more than 30,000 extant items) and Wing’s catalogue covering 1641 to 1700, now available on CD-Rom and containing more than 90,000 records.<sup>1</sup> I should emphasise that when in 1990 we began this project, the extension of ESTC to cover the period before 1700 was still a tantalizing but distant prospect.

Immediately, then, it was clear that the task must be approached in two stages: first by using Pantzer’s revision of STC in hard copy in order to count up to 1640; and then using the Wing CD-Rom when it became available in 1996 to complete the project by counting up to 1700. What I propose to do here is to reflect on the experience of working on these two stages: the first, manually counting the items in the printed STC, and the second counting electronically the Wing items, using the CD-Rom. In the process I hope to demonstrate the ways in which the speed and apparent ease of electronic counting was offset, at least in part, by difficulties in the design of the electronic database; and to point to the limitations as well as the possibilities of this kind of work.

I should also say, as a necessary preliminary statement, that we began by being well aware of the problems and reservations Dr. Amory has already

Fig. 1 STC chronological index annual totals 1475-1640.  
From Bell & Barnard, p. 57.



outlined.<sup>2</sup> Since any figures we produce are reliant on the recording of extant titles, they must be set in a context which discusses possible loss rates and the ways in which knowledge of those lost, unknown books might affect our reading of the results. Counting titles, after all, is at best a dubious practice and it would be far better to be able to count – as Miriam Chrisman has done for Strasbourg imprints – masterformes or at least sheets printed.<sup>3</sup> Even then, the question of edition sizes remains intractable in a period for which there is little surviving evidence on print runs and when edition sizes were hugely variable depending on the type of book. But attempting sheet-counts for well over 100,000 items was hardly a practicable proposition at this stage, though it was possible to sample a few particular years in detail.<sup>4</sup> Pragmatically, therefore, we decided to find out what we could with the data to which we had ready access. In doing so, we had to recognise that the enterprise was compromised to some extent by our reliance on records of extant books and on titles as the unit of measurement.

#### FIRST PHASE: STC TITLES 1475-1640

Using Philip Rider's chronological index to STC we arrived at the results indicated in Figure 1.<sup>5</sup> Arriving at the figures represented by the graph was a

long and tortuous process and the methodological details have already been published, so I would like to explain the problems with this graph by focussing on just two examples of serious inaccuracy.<sup>6</sup>

First, there is the problem of duplication. The figures retrieved from STC inevitably contain some duplication because the Index to STC records items both under the date as given in the *title* of a book (for example in the case of sermons or descriptions of speeches, trials and other events) as well as under the date given in the imprint; where these differ, the single book will appear twice in the Index. Similarly, false dates given in imprints may be supplemented by inferred dates supplied by STC, and again this results in one item appearing at two dates in the chronological Index. While the Index does distinguish, for example, old-style and new-style dates, so that we could exclude some kinds of duplication, others were intractable. Consequently, we estimate that there may be about 6,000 items too many represented in our graph.

Secondly, there is a problem with undated items. It is obvious that the graph shows regular peaks and on first glance this might seem to indicate a wide variation in book production from year to year. In fact the peaks occur regularly, at five-yearly intervals, and are the result of British Library cataloguing practice rather than ‘real’ peaks in output. This is because STC, like its contributing libraries, gives a nominal date-range to undated items, placing for example an individual item assumed to belong to the decade 1580–90 at one of those dates, or at 1585 as the mid-point. Where STC gives the date as, for example, ‘c.1580’, the implied date-range is five years either side that date; where the date is given as ‘1580?’ the date range is two to three years either side. The consequence is that our figures for all years whose dates end in ‘0’ or ‘5’ are inflated, and since the proportion of undated items increases the further back in time we go, this effect is more pronounced for the earlier years of the graph.

Clearly, in its particulars – in relation especially to an underlying inflation of all the figures and in relation to the peak years – our graph seems hardly to be trusted.

#### SECOND PHASE: WING 1641–1700

Perhaps naively I had looked forward to the release of the Wing CD-Rom in 1996 as the key to producing rather more reliable data for the second stage of our project: the period 1641–1700.<sup>7</sup> I shall again use two examples to demonstrate that using the CD-Rom posed new problems.

First, the problem of duplication encountered in the first phase of the

project did not disappear, but simply changed its nature. Whereas STC usually supplies a single date [with 'c.' or '?'] for undated items, the CD-Rom offers a date-range. Where, for example, STC would give a single date flagged as approximate ('1605?') the Wing CD-Rom gives a range such as '1665/66', '1645-1650', or even in some cases '1641-1700'. Any item given a date-range in this way is retrieved by a search on *any* date within that range. Thus, the '1665/66' item will be retrieved twice; the '1645-1650' item will be retrieved six times; and the '1641-1700' item will be retrieved 60 times. It is possible – by conducting several searches and combining them – to exclude these items completely, and we have done so. The result, therefore, is a *deflation* in items counted since these items with date-ranges are then removed entirely. Whereas a simple search on a single year – 1666 for example – would lead to massive over-estimation, a more complex search to exclude all items given date-ranges removes nearly 30% of that year's apparent output.

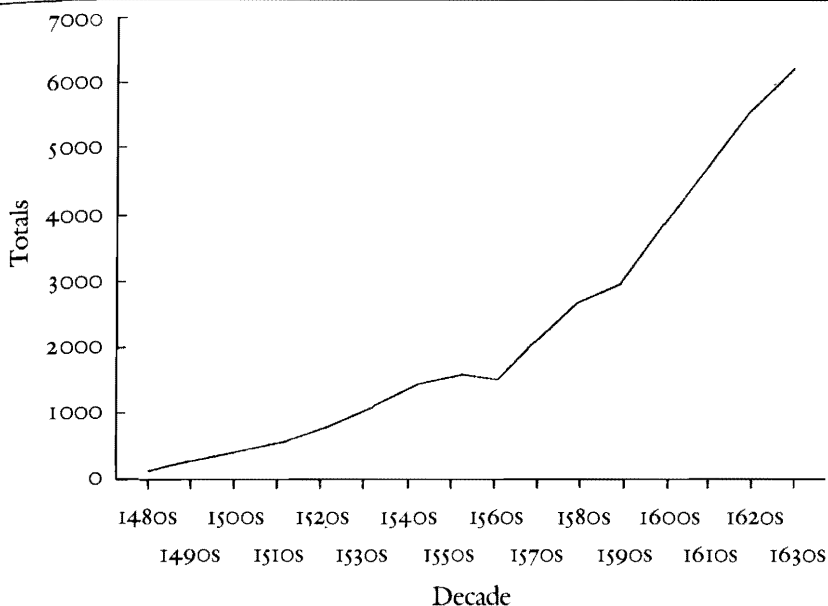
A second feature of the CD-Rom which creates difficulties for quantitative work is that it retains entries which, in the course of the revision of Wing, have been cancelled. This is, of course, in many circumstances a helpful feature, in that it enables the user of Wing to track cancelled and re-assigned entries easily; but for the kind of statistical work we are attempting this proves an unfortunate obstacle. If, for example, we exclude all the date-range items for 1666, as described above, we are left with 633 items for that year. Of those 633, however, 38 are in fact 'ghosts': cancelled entries. The CD-Rom does not allow searches on the *status* of entries, so it is impossible simply to search for and exclude all cancelled entries. The only way to remove them would be by examining each individual record retrieved for each individual year. This is not impossible, but would be inordinately time-consuming, and would nullify all the supposed benefits of speed offered by electronic counting!

#### CONCLUSION

It is clear that in each of the stages I have described, whether using the hard copy of STC to count manually or using the Wing CD-Rom to count electronically, the underlying nature of the cataloguing and, indeed, the underlying purpose of the records' construction are not immediately hospitable to the kind of quantification project in which we are engaged. I would like to end by arguing that, although the results of exercises such as these are necessarily imperfect, they are not completely useless; and to point to some issues which arise from the experience I have described.



Fig. 2 STC chronological index decade totals 1480-1639.  
From Bell & Barnard, p. 57.



1. Our totals for individual years as represented in Figure 1 are demonstrably imprecise, but have some value in that they can be used to indicate trends in output. If we replace the apparent (but misleading) precision of the annual totals in Figure 1 with a graph which cumulates the totals by decade or half-decade, we can see the underlying trend and rate of increase. Figure 2 gives such a graph, which offers a broad and arguably more reliable basis for discussing publishing output in the period.

2. The attempt at quantifying production should not be an end in itself, but rather one part of a complex attempt to map the economics of the book trade. Our own 'macro' study is necessarily accompanied by 'micro'-level work, by which I mean the sampling and detailed scrutiny of sample years across the whole period. At this level, detailed investigation of sheet-counts, anonymous printing, subject and genre, format and language can be undertaken. Better still is close analysis working from the books themselves, of the kind done by Don McKenzie for 1668 and Mark Bland for 1600, supplementing the reconstruction of one year's output by other sources

so as to offer a context (number of presses, workmen, apprentices, edition size information).<sup>8</sup> One hope for the future is that ESTC will enable detailed work of this kind to proceed more swiftly.

3. We must raise the profile of work on quantification (as this conference is doing) so that those who are creating bibliographical databases are aware of the potential of their data for book historians. Working with the Wing CD-Rom brought home to me very forcefully the realisation that I was battling to achieve something which this database was not designed to support. It is, of course, frustrating to be unable to search the data in ways which would prove helpful for my own work, but it is hardly the fault of the CD-Rom designers who presumably had no idea that anyone would want, for example, to search negatively: to find titles with no imprint, no place of publication, etc, or to identify cancelled entries.

4. Lastly, in doing the kind of quantification I have described we must resist being seduced by the false sense of precision which a set of statistics implies. Looming behind our endeavours lie the caveats and cautions spelt out by Dr. Amory. Counting titles (or, rather, records) is in its details potentially misleading but it at least gives us a broad picture and indicates where the interesting questions for further research might lie. Establishing loss rates so as to contextualise our counting of *extant* books is difficult but not impossible and for some kinds of texts, such as psalm books and ABCs, progress is being made.<sup>9</sup> Most importantly, it is imperative that those of us producing and publishing these kinds of quantitative data are meticulous in supplying warnings, contexts, reservations and explanations, so that no-one using our work will impute to it a precision which we ourselves would never wish to claim.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland ... 1475-1640*, comp. A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 2nd ed. revised and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson and completed by K. F. Pantzer (3 vols., 1976-91); *Wing short-title catalogue 1641-1700 on CD-Rom* (1996).

<sup>2</sup> See above and Hugh Amory, 'A note on statistics' (Appendix One) in H. Amory and D. Hall (eds.), *A history of the book in America, Vol. I: The colonial book in the Atlantic world* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 504-18.

<sup>3</sup> M. Chrisman, *Lay culture, learned culture: books and social change in Strasbourg, 1480-1559* (New Haven CT, 1982); and see Margaret Lane Ford's remarks below. For an example of the disparity between sheet- and title-counting see H. Amory, 'A note on statistics'. My particular thanks to Professor Henry Snyder who, in the discussion

following this paper, generously offered to attempt a masterform count of ESTC records on our behalf. Such a count, if feasible, will add significantly to our current picture of press output in the period.

<sup>4</sup> Sample surveys from the STC period have been undertaken for the years 1529–33; 1547–51; 1564–68; to be summarised in the ‘Statistical Appendices’ to *A history of the book in Britain vol.IV 1557–1695* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> Our thanks to Philip Rider for allowing us to use his index, then in its draft form. Our results were later checked against the Index when it appeared, with some revisions, in published form as part of Volume 3 of STC. Figs. 1 and 2 are reprinted, by kind permission of Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., from M. Bell and J. Barnard, ‘Provisional count of STC titles 1475–1640’, in: *Publishing History* 31 (1992), pp. 48–64.

<sup>6</sup> The methodology is described in Bell and Barnard, ‘Provisional count of STC titles’.

<sup>7</sup> J. Barnard and M. Bell, ‘Provisional Count of Wing Titles 1641–1700’, in: *Publishing History* 44 (1998), 89–97.

<sup>8</sup> D. F. McKenzie’s survey of 1668 and a summary of J. Barnard’s survey of 1676 will appear in *A history of the book in Britain, vol.IV 1557–1695* (forthcoming). Mark Bland, ‘The London book-trade in 1600 and its contexts’ in D. Kastan (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1999), ch. 28. Other ‘micro’-level contextual work involves the reconstruction of the output of particular printing houses: see, for example, J. Barnard and M. Bell, ‘The inventory of Henry Bynneman (1583): a preliminary survey’, in: *Publishing History* 29 (1991), pp. 5–46.

<sup>9</sup> J. Barnard, ‘The Stationers’ stock 1663/4 to 1705/6: psalms, psalters, primers and ABCs’, in: *The Library*, 6th series 21 (1999), pp. 369–75.

<sup>10</sup> H. Amory, ‘A note on statistics’, makes the same point in relation to statistics derived from the North American Imprints Program: ‘For the moment, our figures should be seen as a provisional, highly conjectural measure of production; their precision should not be mistaken for accuracy.’

# History Counts: Masterformes in Quantitative Analysis for the History of the Book

MARGARET LANE FORD

In the context of a conference on quantitative methods in bibliography, it is appropriate to highlight one tool often overlooked in bibliometrics: the masterforme. It is an extremely useful unit of measuring printing activity devised by Miriam Usher Chrisman, which has not been fully exploited in subsequent studies of history or even of history of the book. A brief outline of its use by Chrisman and by myself in my work for the third volume of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* may encourage its wider application.<sup>1</sup>

Chrisman's book, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture, Books and Social Change in Strasbourg*, is a study of the city of Strasbourg from 1480 to 1599. Chrisman based her study of the intellectual life of sixteenth-century Strasbourg on printed books, which, as cultural artifacts, 'record the ideas currently in circulation'.<sup>2</sup> For reasons of practicality Chrisman restricted her study to books published at Strasbourg, for, while aware that books printed outside the city circulated freely there, it is impossible to recover the entirety of texts available and read by the citizens of Strasbourg. Such a study as Chrisman's required in the first instance a comprehensive bibliography of Strasbourg imprints for her period, which Chrisman compiled. That alone was no mean feat. In gathering her data Chrisman included information on format, number of leaves and subject classification, to enable her to analyse the bibliographic material from a number of viewpoints.

One element of her data was innovative and deserves wider application: the masterforme. It is a unit of measure, whose usefulness has not, as previously stated, been fully exploited. Chrisman herself described the masterforme as 'the large, two-sided frame used to print both sides of the foliosheet of paper. All the masterformes produced in a given year would

constitute a set of type-filled formes, set by the typesetters and used by the pressmen to print the foliosheets that were folded to make books. The masterforme and the foliosheet are the same except that the foliosheet is finite, representing a unique copy. The masterforme is capable of producing multiple copies.<sup>3</sup> To calculate the number of masterformes in a given edition, one simply divides the number of leaves by the format: by 2 for a folio, by 4 for a quarto, by 8 for an octavo, etc. Although the number of masterformes is equal to the number of full sheets, the notion of masterformes, as opposed to sheets, retains the concept of labour, of typesetting, of correcting, and of preparing it for press, and not simply of finished sheets pulled from the press. For this reason I advocate following Chrisman in calling this unit of measure the masterforme.

On the most basic level a calculation by masterforme enabled Chrisman to obtain a more accurate, and certainly a more refined, view of the activity of the Strasbourg printing shops from 1480 to 1599.<sup>4</sup> Her bibliography of Strasbourg imprints resulted in one picture of the importance of Strasbourg printers relative to each other, but the calculation of masterformes made it possible to estimate each printer's yearly production. These calculations in turn, aided by analysis of the books by subject category, language of publication, etc., presented a more precise picture of the activity of individual printers.

One example will demonstrate the marked difference in judging the productivity of printing shops by number of editions versus number of masterformes. Based on number of editions, Johann Knobloch (active 1500–1528) was without question the most active printer in Strasbourg in the period from 1480 to 1599. During that time, he printed 429 separate editions, 40 editions more than the second most prolific Strasbourg printer, Johann Grüninger (1483–1521). When calculated by the number of masterformes per year, however, Knobloch is the sixth most active Strasbourg printer (and Grüninger the eighth), the most productive being Theodosius Rihel (1555–99). Rihel printed a mere 108 editions, as opposed to Knobloch's 429, yet he produced 597 masterformes per annum, compared to Knobloch's average of 333. Thus, Rihel was seeing almost twice as many masterformes through the press as Knobloch.

In addition to assessing the productivity of printing shops in a new and more accurate light, calculation by masterforme contributed in other ways to Chrisman's study of reformation Strasbourg. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she found that the rise and fall in the number of masterformes over the period reflected economic conditions. The Schmalkaldic War and, at the end of the

century, the Bishop's War between 1594–96, depressed activity. One of Chrisman's most interesting observations which came to light directly from a comparison between masterformes and editions was that the early years of the Reformation at Strasbourg were marked by a pamphlet war. There was a startling increase in book production in the years 1523–1528, but the number of masterformes actually dropped; the Reformation produced a huge burst in activity in number of editions printed, but these individual editions often consisted of a few leaves only. While it may seem obvious that the Reformation was marked by the dissemination of a high volume of thin pamphlets, this conclusion is easily proven by a simple statistical comparison between numbers of editions and numbers of masterformes, demonstrating concrete results from Chrisman's method of quantitative measurement.

As her title indicated, Chrisman found distinctive features peculiar to a lay versus a learned culture in Strasbourg. Because she included a language code in her computerised data, she was able to trace language patterns by year, by decade, by subject matter and by printer. This brought to light the sheer significance of printing in the vernacular, which would have gone undetected, and it highlighted a sharp division according to language. This division was not only between authors and subject matter, and peaks and valleys of production, but also in the printing shops. Generally speaking, the larger, more established presses printed scholarly texts for the learned, Latinate market. Texts in German were published by a different group of printers. Careful analysis described and defined two cultures present in reformation Strasbourg: a Latin culture dominated by the universities and the churches, and a vernacular culture rooted in the interests of ordinary men and women. For example, university mathematicians and medical doctors based their work on Greek and Roman physicians, while military surgeons, apothecaries and engineers worked from observation and wrote in the vernacular popular medical manuals and how-to books. This division was not new, but printing aided in formalising the distinction between the two cultures.

The Reformation gave an added boost to publication in the vernacular which was mainly sustained throughout the sixteenth century. Interestingly, theological publication in German, which created the first explosion of vernacular publication, was the one area which decreased after 1530, when the Protestant clergy returned to Latin. Language, then, created a primary division within the intellectual world which was visible and quantifiable in light of Chrisman's analysis.

Chrisman's analysis of masterformes and book production also spotted another feature not easily detected otherwise: so-called 'generations' of

scholars, which helped define the structure of the intellectual community. These generations comprised men of sometimes widely varying ages who shared an intellectual world view during a particular period. Their intellectual activity was reflected in printers' output, and Chrisman was initially alerted to the existence of such generations by line graphs she produced to analyse Strasbourg printing by subject category. These bubbles of activity which appeared in the line graphs and which occurred at different times for different intellectual pursuits, bore deeper investigation. For instance, the production of scientific literature at Strasbourg over Chrisman's 120 years saw three periods of sustained activity. This first quantitative indication, based on numbers of editions and numbers of masterformes, was confirmed by analysing the content of the books, the authors, and their relationship to one another. The first of three scientific generations centred on scholars and teachers who were active primarily in editing and translating the works of others. It was active from about 1500 to 1520. The second 'generation', active from about 1527 to 1543, joined in the search for new sources of scientific knowledge and a reassessment of old procedures. Among this generation were Otto Brunfels and Johann Guinther von Andernach, and the presence of Paracelsus in the city in 1526–1527 no doubt added extra stimulation to this generation. The third generation of published scientists did not emerge until after 1570. They, like the first generation, combined literary and scientific pursuits. Scientific disciplines now formed part of the curriculum of the new Academy at Strasbourg and academic scientists were again centered on classical texts such as Aristotle and Euclid, and on Paracelsan texts. As Chrisman notes, the computer confirmed patterns, such as intellectual generations or linguistic divisions, which were known theoretically but had not yet been proven.

The application of a calculation by masterforme has proven fruitful in my own work on the importation and ownership of printed books into England and Scotland from 1450 to 1550. Because printing was not introduced into England until 1476 by William Caxton, more than 25 years after Gutenberg's first invention at Mainz, and no books were printed in Scotland until the sixteenth century, any demand for printed books in Britain before 1476 had to be met from abroad. The importation of books into Britain continued and increased after native printing had been established. My evidence for importation was drawn from surviving books which show marks of English or Scottish ownership during that period, and I, like Chrisman, created a database to record details of editions, including format and masterformes, as well as copy-specific details. Unlike Chrisman, I have not been

concerned with establishing the activity of any particular printing shops *per se*, but rather with investigating, among other points, what books were owned in Britain and what centres of printing supplied those books. Masterformes have a particular relevance to studies of the importation and ownership of books, as they take into account the economics of trade and acquisition. Simply, a big book costs more than a little book; it requires more labour and more paper. For a study of importation, this has added relevance as a big book is heavier and bulkier and thus costs more to ship, adding to a higher price to the end consumer.

One of my basic questions was, which printing centres were supplying books to England and Scotland? A quick analysis upheld a previous pilot study of book importation into England from 1480 to 1520 by Lotte Heltinga, which found that a relatively small number of printing centres was providing the large majority of books.<sup>5</sup> Of the 88 printing centres represented in my survey, just 8 cities supplied 85% of the total. Although which cities constitute the dominant few change from decade to decade, the proportions are constant. In the study as a whole, Venice was the leading supplier of printed books to England, followed by Paris, Basel, Cologne, Lyon, Strasbourg and Nuremberg.

When calculated by masterforme, as opposed to number of copies, a slightly different picture emerges. Basel stands equal with Venice, reflecting Basel's production of multi-volume editions of St Augustine and large Bibles, and Lyon increases its standing twofold. Cologne has the only decrease of significance in its percentage of the whole. This is not surprising when one thinks of the thin quarto tracts in which early Cologne printers specialised. Indeed, 30% of books printed at Cologne and supplied to England were quartos, as opposed to only 10% and 18% from Venice and Basel.

Another striking difference between number of copies and numbers of masterformes occurs in the pattern of importation in the 1520s. A significant increase in masterformes is evident in that decade, which is undetected when looking only at number of copies. Further investigation according to subject category revealed that this increase reflects the size and number of Bibles being supplied to England. Whereas in number of copies general theology is the largest subject category, in masterformes Bibles become the largest category, making up a full half (50%) of the total. Printers at Lyon are responsible for the increase in Bible production in that decade. Bibles account for 30% of the number of copies of Lyonnese printing imported to England in the 1520s, yet they make up 94% of the number



of masterformes. No other centre of printing in this survey was so dominated by printing one kind of book as Lyon in the 1520s.

The previous examples show just some of the possibilities and benefits to the history of the book arising from the use of masterformes. The prerequisite for making such a calculation is an accurate record of format and number of leaves, or collation, and it is hoped that such edition information will be incorporated into on-going and subsequent computerised bibliographical resources.

<sup>1</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture, Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480–1599*, New Haven and London, 1982. Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of printed books into England and Scotland', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400–1557*, eds. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp. Cambridge, 1999, pp. 179–201. Related to it in the same volume is my 'Private ownership of printed books', pp. 205–228.

<sup>2</sup> Chrisman, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Chrisman, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> One vital piece of information necessary to judging a printer's activity with complete accuracy – edition size – remains elusive in most cases.

<sup>5</sup> This study has been published: Lotte Hellinga, 'Importation of books printed on the Continent into England and Scotland before c.1520', in: *Printing the Written Word*, ed. S. L. Hindman, Ithaca and London, 1991, pp. 205–224.

# Face aux attentes des chercheurs: réflexions sur les bases données rétrospectives

MARÍA-LUISA LÓPEZ-VIDRIERO

## 1. CHOIX DU GROUPE D'UTILISATEURS

Les historiens du livre et de la lecture semblent n'être qu'une petite partie des universitaires à utiliser les bases de données rétrospectives. Si, comme point de départ pour cet exposé, je prends les chiffres d'utilisation du patrimoine bibliographique historique du Patrimonio Nacional, je dois avouer que ce groupe ne représente pas plus de 10%.<sup>1</sup> Ceci dit, on a tout le droit de considérer comme superflue l'étude d'un secteur aussi petit, et par conséquent, aussi peu représentatif. Pourtant, du moins à mon avis, ce groupe présente un profil plein d'intérêt, qui m'a conduite à le choisir pour en débattre dans ce volet sur la méthodologie. Je précise que mon étude a pour cadre l'Espagne et les historiens espagnols du livre et de la lecture.

Une série de traits élargit la représentativité de ce groupe de chercheurs et le place à un niveau supérieur à celui qui lui revient numériquement. Tout d'abord par sa formation, qui fait de lui un utilisateur idéal. Soit que sa capacité d'interroger de façon qualifiée la base de données rétrospective nous permette de mesurer, par la satisfaction ou l'insatisfaction de sa demande, la qualité de la base, soit que les résultats de sa demande permettent d'améliorer la qualité de la base. Sa capacité comme utilisateur augmente la possibilité d'exploitation et d'amélioration de la base. Ces deux éléments le renforcent comme groupe.

Le fait que les historiens du livre, comme secteur de recherche, regroupent en ce moment un ensemble très vaste du point de vue disciplinaire, augmente encore leur poids spécifique comme groupe d'étude. Le fait que l'histoire du livre et de la lecture soit considérée actuellement comme une histoire de la culture, incite les historiens, les philologues, les personnes se consacrant à l'étude de la littérature et de l'art, pour ne citer que quelques

disciplines, à s'occuper aujourd'hui de matières réservées auparavant aux bibliographes et aux bibliothécaires.

Les historiens du livre représentent, aujourd'hui, un ensemble de chercheurs considérable; aussi, l'étude de leur comportement face aux bases de données rétrospectives met-elle à notre disposition un riche potentiel d'analyse. De plus, il s'agit d'un groupe de chercheurs en augmentation et, en termes bibliométriques, sa production le montre en pleine croissance.

Ainsi la nouvelle définition de la discipline a introduit de nouveaux secteurs universitaires et confère à ce groupe en augmentation un niveau de représentation plus élevé. Le spectre disciplinaire d'analyse devient, par conséquent, bien plus large.

### *2.1 Quelques considérations sur l'Espagne*

L'histoire du livre, comme tant d'autres disciplines, dépend de l'accumulation de petites données à une large échelle. L'introduction des bases de données bibliographiques offre à la discipline des possibilités nouvelles et plus nombreuses qui, à leur tour, créent de nouvelles demandes, de nouveaux droits et de nouvelles obligations. Pour être plus proches des attentes des historiens du livre, il faudrait ajouter à ce principe général quelques autres considérations.<sup>2</sup>

Je voudrais souligner en passant – le sujet est en lui-même matière pour une conférence – qu'un des effets des bases de données rétrospectives a été de nous faire considérer le concept d'édition d'un point de vue différent. À mon avis, cela a modifié les attitudes des 'bâtisseurs' et des utilisateurs des bases. Préciser l'intérêt pour l'étude de l'exemplaire comme une tendance reconnaissable de l'histoire actuelle du livre me semble nécessaire. Une bibliographie, large et solide, nous montre l'attention qu'une grande partie des historiens du livre lui accorde. Les marques de propriété, intellectuelle ou matérielle, font l'objet d'analyse pour ceux qui étudient l'histoire de la lecture, ses pratiques, la sociologie du livre. Si l'apparition d'ouvrages de référence et l'utilisation d'un vocabulaire spécifique prouvent la consistance d'une direction de recherche, le *Books with manuscripts* de Robin Alston<sup>3</sup> ou l'emploi de *postillati*,<sup>4</sup> doivent être considérés comme une preuve évidente de la consolidation de ces études. Expositions, réunions internationales, numéros monographiques,<sup>5</sup> etc. . . multiplier les références me semble inutile. Résumons en disant que, dès les années 90, l'étude de l'exemplaire émerge comme un secteur reconnaissable et reconnu de l'histoire du livre.

Pour l'Espagne, nous devons ajouter que le déplacement de l'étude du livre, du domaine du positivisme à celui de la bibliographie matérielle et du

quantitativisme s'est terminé, de façon plus brusque que dans le reste de l'Europe, par une claire prépondérance du livre et de la lecture comme partie de l'histoire culturelle. L'historiographie actuelle signale les nouveaux domaines de la recherche, tels que le contrôle du livre, les circuits commerciaux et culturels, la formation de collections.<sup>6</sup> L'exploitation des archives des dernières décennies a produit un relevé massif d'inventaires – l'automatisation des Archives Nationales: Archivo General de Simancas, Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Archivo de Indias (Sevilla), a grandement facilité ce travail. Dans un premier temps, le quantitativisme a été le grand bénéficiaire; les années 80 ont été un 'âge d'or'. A cette époque, les historiens du livre ont consulté les bases de données rétrospectives en fonction de l'édition. Le but était d'identifier des ouvrages cités dans les inventaires et les analyses bibliométriques. Leurs demandes et leurs attentes sur l'exemplaire se sont limitées à la simple localisation. Désormais, bien que ces recherches soient encore en cours, la lecture des inventaires se fait selon d'autres principes. L'évaluation de la diffusion du livre comme propriété privée d'un groupe social ou géographique n'en est plus l'exclusivité. Les pratiques de la lecture, les usages de l'imprimé, comme nous l'avons dit, font partie des intérêts présents des historiens. L'étude de l'exemplaire, comme source de recherche, vient désormais en tête des préoccupations. Les bases de données rétrospectives sont interrogées dans l'espoir de mettre sur la piste de l'individualité. La description de l'exemplaire et la reconstruction de son histoire jouent un rôle prépondérant. Ce que recherche l'historien, c'est une notice bibliographique décrivant d'une seule façon une édition à laquelle sont affectés tous les éléments de différenciation des unités la représentant. La singularité est l'une des priorités de la recherche.

La notice d'exemplaire doit donc répondre à de nouvelles exigences. Mais avant de jeter un coup d'oeil sur ce dont les bases de données espagnoles ou hispaniques sont capables d'offrir en ce moment au groupe d'historiens du livre, on devrait faire une dernière remarque à propos de l'Espagne.

## *2.2. Le changement politique et économique: le développement de la bibliographie*

La transformation ou le changement d'orientation de l'histoire du livre en Espagne coïncide, en grande partie, avec l'automatisation des grandes bibliothèques et l'application de l'informatique à la bibliographie. Une transformation liée au changement politique et économique espagnol a permis la modernisation des bibliothèques et l'essor de l'édition. La mise en route des catalogues collectifs et la publication d'une riche bibliographie sur le patrimoine livresque et documentaire en sont une des conséquences.<sup>7</sup>

A partir des années 80, le Centre du Patrimoine Bibliographique lance le catalogue collectif et permet un nouvel accès aux collections. La Catalogne et les autres régions suivent son exemple. Actuellement, les bases de données rétrospectives sont les suivantes: CCCAL (*Catálogo Colectivo de Castilla y León*), CCPB (*Catálogo Colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico Español*), CCPBC (*Catàleg Colectiu de Biblioteques de Catalunya*) et CBUC (*Catàleg de Biblioteques Universitaries de Catalunya*).<sup>8</sup> Les Archives Nationales n'ont pas atteint un niveau semblable, mais elles ont fait de très sérieux progrès en matière d'automatisation et de numérisation. La contribution espagnole à la bibliographie annuelle de l'IFLA, *Annual Bibliography of the History of the printed Book and Libraries* (ABHB), montre l'essor de la recherche sur les questions relatives au livre et à la lecture.<sup>9</sup> On n'a pas tort d'accorder au développement des ressources bibliothéconomiques nationales une part du mérite.

Profiter de l'amélioration des catalogues des bibliothèques et contributions des catalogues collectifs pour l'élaboration des annales typographiques ou 'typobibliographies' était une occasion trop bonne pour la laisser tomber. Tout un mouvement bibliographique est ainsi né. Les typobibliographies d'Alcalá de Henares, de Salamanca, de Segovia, de Sevilla, de Madrid, de Lérida, et de Logroño, virent le jour dans leur ombre.<sup>10</sup> L'état des autonomies a favorisé les recherches d'histoire locale et régionale. Des classiques de la bibliographie épuisés ont été réédités avec de mises au jour;<sup>11</sup> des études sur l'imprimerie ou le commerce du livre sortent fréquemment des presses régionales.<sup>12</sup>

Ce mouvement 'typobibliographique' a permis aux historiens du livre de connaître, de façon plus fiable, l'imprimerie et l'édition espagnole et de disposer des éléments de contrôle et de correction pour les bases de données rétrospectives. Il est dommage que cette production n'ait pas été envisagée comme édition électronique. Sa publication sur papier a fermé les portes à l'utilisation électronique d'une information précieuse pour le catalogue en découlant et pour la recherche universitaire.

L'apparition de ce corpus de référence a poussé les historiens du livre à interroger les bases de données rétrospectives selon d'autres points de vues bibliographiques, s'intéressant plus à ce qui s'écarte de la 'normalité bibliographique' (émissions, états) qu'aux bibliographies ou aux annales typographiques. Ainsi, ce mouvement a-t-il contribué au changement des tensions entre ce groupe de chercheurs et les bases de données.

### 3. QU'ATTEND UN HISTORIEN DU LIVRE DE LA NOTICE D'EXEMPLAIRE?

#### 3.1. *Ce que les bibliothèques n'ont pas donné*

La façon dont on a considéré un exemplaire et les informations que l'on doit relever dans sa description, font partie des différentes traditions catalographiques. C'est sans doute le manque d'homogénéité de la notice d'exemplaire qui s'avère le plus évident, puisque toute normalisation nous manque. Pour la notice d'exemplaire, il n'y a pas eu de protocoles précis, du moins en Espagne. Il ne s'agit plus d'envisager les problèmes des modèles successifs de description et de leurs différentes interprétations ou applications – ce qui est déjà beaucoup –, mais de faire face à des décisions personnelles ou, dans le meilleur des cas, établies par un centre. Le caractère occasionnel a caractérisé la formulation de la notice d'exemplaire.

Si l'une des difficultés de l'historien du livre dans les bases de données rétrospectives est de se retrouver dans les différentes notices bibliographiques, d'un point de vue descriptif, sa perplexité et sa confusion atteignent leur maximum face aux notices d'exemplaire. La rétroconversion à partir de laquelle se sont formées les bases de données a été faite à partir des catalogues traditionnels. Dans la plupart des cas, l'on n'a pas ajouté aux notices d'exemplaire une grande partie des informations que pendant des années, les bibliothécaires ont annotées en marge des catalogues imprimés, sur des cahiers de notes, sur des fiches. Il s'agit d'une information précieuse, que je dénomme 'bibliographie grise' de l'exemplaire et qui constitue un outil de travail interne des bibliothécaires, mais qui ne parvient pas aux chercheurs.

D'autre part, le décalage entre l'automatisation du catalogue et celle des archives des bibliothèques a empêché de mettre en parallèle les informations bibliographiques et celles se rapportant à la formation de la collection et qui, logiquement, peuvent fournir des renseignements importants pour les exemplaires et leur histoire. Les archives de la Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE) sont partiellement informatisées et ne sont pas accessibles au public.<sup>13</sup> L'Archivo General de Palacio (AGP), qui recèle la documentation sur le Patrimonio Nacional, sont en cours d'automatisation. Les archives de l'Escorial ne sont pas informatisées. Certes, l'historien du livre attend plus des notices d'exemplaires d'une bibliothèque locale ou d'une collection concrète. En ce qui concerne l'exemplaire, son niveau d'attente – satisfaction ou frustration –, est presque toujours inversement proportionnel à la taille de la base de données.

3.2. *Le rôle des bibliothèques locales.*

Le travail sur l'exemplaire ne peut partir que des bibliothèques. Le choix de la collection dans les grands centres s'avère nécessaire, car une base de données de grandeur abordable est un point de départ réaliste. La bibliothèque locale ou le développement de projets concrets, mais toujours insérés ou susceptibles de l'être dans les bases de données du centre, sont des bases pouvant répondre de façon satisfaisante aux besoins de l'historien en quête de données d'exemplaires. Jusqu'à présent, les problèmes de codification de l'information de la notice d'exemplaire s'imposaient aux bibliothécaires. Heureusement, aujourd'hui un problème aussi grave semble résolu par le format UNIMARC. Cela permettra aux bibliothèques d'aborder le travail même du contenu de la notice.

Où en sommes-nous en ce moment? Jetons un coup d'oeil sur quelques exemples des bases de données rétrospectives espagnoles.

L'éventail de problèmes est assez large. Définir l'information à fournir et établir un vocabulaire normalisé semblent des mesures urgentes. La disparité, voire le manque de critère que l'on a vus dans les exemples, sont trop éloquents.

En ce qui concerne les notes, l'établissement d'une typologie des 'marginalia' est prioritaire (interprétatives, critiques, philologiques; articulées ou inarticulées, signes abstraits ou figuratifs), des corrections de texte. Ceci doit se faire sur les marques de propriété et sur les descriptions des reliures.

Les historiens du livre réclament aussi les informations des anciens inventaires qui vont bien au-delà de la simple mention de l'*olim*. Le dépouillement des anciens inventaires de la bibliothèque et des inventaires des bibliothèque privées se trouvant dans sa collection pose des problèmes méthodologiques qu'il faut résoudre: la transcription, la classification du type d'inventaire (typologie documentaire, évaluation de biens, enchères, post-mortem) quantitative (nombre d'items) ou référentielle (bibliothèque conventuelle, princière).

Mais le travail à faire sur l'exemplaire exige la collaboration étroite entre l'historien et la bibliothèque pour des questions d'identification personnelle (noblesse, clergé, hautes charges de l'administration) ou de disponibilité d'autres inventaires.

On ne peut que regretter que les travaux importants sur les inventaires se fassent hors du domaine des bibliothèques. Proposer une méthodologie, avancer un vocabulaire, tester la qualité et apporter les corrections nécessaires peuvent être les premiers pas de la démarche. Après, un organisme

national ou international pourra peut-être lancer une proposition formelle. A côté du travail portant sur la notice de l'exemplaire, toute une série d'outils complémentaires est à entreprendre.

### 3.3. *Quelques propositions.*

L'analyse des problèmes que rencontrent les historiens du livre dans une base de données rétrospective comme celle du Patrimonio Nacional, IBIS, nous a amenés à penser qu'au-delà des informations sur l'exemplaire, la Real Biblioteca devrait mettre au point d'autres instruments destinés à une recherche exigeant une profonde connaissance de l'histoire de la bibliothèque et des bibliothèques particulières qui lui ont été annexées. Dans ce sens, nos idées sont destinées à:

- Développer le 'feed back' entre les chercheurs et la base de données. On distribue depuis quelques mois un formulaire d'actualisation bibliographique sur les exemplaires.
- Développer le 'feed back' entre les chercheurs et la bibliothèque. Récupération d'informations.
- Créer des bases de données permettant la visualisation des marques de propriété des principales collections:
  - ex-libris, superlibros, autographes,
  - relieurs (fers les identifiant, anagrammes, étiquettes).
- Dépouiller les anciens catalogues et inventaires des collections pour dessiner l'histoire de l'exemplaire. On a commencé par une petite collection, celle des incunables (261 notices).

Les analyses des années prochaines nous montrerons les résultats.

<sup>1</sup> Real Biblioteca (Madrid) *Memoria Anual* 1997–1999. [document administratif].

<sup>2</sup> Clairement exposé par Dr. Lotte Hellings lors du dernier Séminaire d'Histoire du Livre de la Fundación Duques de Soria, *La impronta en el libro* (Salamanca, avril, 1999) dans sa conférence *Records of provenance in the HPB database (à paraître)*.

<sup>3</sup> *Books with Manuscripts: a short-tittle catalogue with manuscript notes in the British Library* by R. C. Alston. London, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Giuseppe Frasso, 'Libri a stampa postillati. Riflessioni suggerite da un catalogo'. *Aevum*, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, juin, 1999.– Bibliographie interne dans l'article de Bernard M. Rosenthal 'Cataloging manuscript annotations in printed books. Some thoughts and suggestions from the other side of the academic fence'. *Anatomie bibliologique. Saggi di storia del libro*. . . Firenze, 1999, pp.583–595.



<sup>6</sup> M. L. López-Vidriero, 'Los estudios de Historia del Libro en España durante el siglo XX'. *La Bibliofilia* 101 (2000), pp.123-35. – Manuel Peña, *Cataluña en el Renacimiento: libros y lenguas*. Lérida, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Mercedes Dexeus, 'El catálogo colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico: fundación y planteamiento'. *Homenaje a Justo García Morales*. . . Madrid, 1987, pp.123-40. – M. L. López-Vidriero, art. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Consultables à travers la Web *Consortios de bibliotecas y catálogos colectivos de Europa* ([www.cbuc.es/wcastella/europa.html](http://www.cbuc.es/wcastella/europa.html)): CCAL ([www.bcl.jcyl.es/CatColectivos/](http://www.bcl.jcyl.es/CatColectivos/)), CCPB ([www.mcu.es/ccpb/index.html](http://www.mcu.es/ccpb/index.html)), CCPBC ([www.gencat.es/bc/virtua2/catalan](http://www.gencat.es/bc/virtua2/catalan)), CBUC ([www.cbuc.es](http://www.cbuc.es))

<sup>9</sup> Sous la responsabilité de Mme. Concha, Département de Référence de la Biblioteca Nacional.

<sup>10</sup> Julián Martín Abad, *La imprenta en Alcalá de Henares (1501-1600)*. Madrid, 1991; *La imprenta en Alcalá de Henares (Siglo XVII)*. Madrid, 1999. Aurora Domínguez Guzmán, *La imprenta en Sevilla y Méjico*. Sevilla, 1992. Lorenzo Ruiz Fidalgo, *La imprenta en Salamanca (1501-1600)*. Madrid, 1994. Francisco Reyes Gómez, *La imprenta en Segovia (1472-1900)*. Madrid, 1997. M. Jiménez Catalán, *La imprenta en Lérida: Ensayo bibliográfico (1479-1917)*. Lérida, 1997. María Marsá, *La imprenta en La Rioja (1502-1666)*. Madrid, [en presse]. Yolanda Clemente San Román, *La imprenta en Madrid en el siglo XVI (1566-1600)*. Kassel, 1998. Justa Moreno Garbayo, *La imprenta en Madrid (1626-1650)*. Madrid, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Juan Sánchez, *Bibliografía aragonesa del siglo xvi 1501-1600*. Madrid, 1913-4. Ed. facsimil: Madrid, 1991. C. Pérez Pastor, *La imprenta en Medina del Campo*. Madrid, 1895. Ed. facsimil: Salamanca, 1992. C. Pérez Pastor, *La imprenta en Toledo*. Madrid, 1887. Ed. facsimil: Valencia, 1994. Manuel Martínez Añibarro, *Intento de un diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de autores de la provincia de Burgos*. Madrid, 1889. Ed. facsimil: Salamanca, 1993. Mariano Alcocer, *Catálogo de obras impresas en Valladolid: 1481-1800*. Valladolid, 1926. Ed. facsimil: [Valladolid], 1993. Anastasio López, *La imprenta en Galicia, siglos XV-XVIII*. Madrid, 1953. Ed. facsimil: Santiago de Compostela, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> Vicente Bécares Botas, *La librería de Benito Boyer: Medina del Campo, 1592*. Vicente Bécares Botas, Alejandro Luis Iglesias. [Salamanca], 1992. (La Imprenta, Libros y Libreros; 1). Luis Fernández, *La Real imprenta del Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Prado: 1481-1835*. [Salamanca], 1992. (La Imprenta, Libros y Libreros; 3). Angel Weruaga Prieto, *Libros y lectura en Salamanca: del barroco a la ilustración (1650-1725)*. [Salamanca], 1993. (La imprenta, Libros y libreros; 5). Anastasio Rojo Vega, *Impresores, libreros y papeleros en Medina del Campo y Valladolid en el siglo XVII*. [Salamanca], 1994. (La Imprenta, libros y libreros; 7). Marta de la Mano González, *Mercaderes e impresores de libros en la Salamanca del siglo XVI*. Salamanca, 1998. [Acta Salmanticensia. Estudios Históricos y Geográficos 106].

<sup>13</sup> *Knosys* n'est pas accessible à travers l'Opac de la BNE. Sous demande, on peut le consulter, restrictivement, au Service des Manuscrits et Livres Rares.

## SUMMARY

1. Even though historians of the book and of reading constitute only 10% of the users of a retrospective database – that percentage at least has been found for the Spanish Patrimonio Nacional – they form an interesting group, particularly well qualified to evaluate the quality of the database they use. The discipline of history of the book has shifted towards cultural studies, and historians of language, literature and art tend to use as their sources the materials that were formerly domaines exclusive to bibliographers and librarians.

2. One of the consequences of the now much improved access to the numerous small data on which the discipline of history of the book relies is a growing awareness of the distinct functions of recording editions and describing copies of editions. Copy-specific features provide students of the history of reading with their basic material for interpretation and analysis. In Spain, the history of the book and of reading have more abruptly become part of cultural history than in most other European countries. Commercial and cultural connections, control of the book-trade and the formation of collections are now part of modern historiography.

The amount of available data has been massively increased by opening up archives. The 1980s have been a golden age for mining the main national archives, while scholars use retrospective databases for identifying the works cited in inventories and other archival documents. But inventories also reveal the distribution of books among individuals and social groupings. Copy-specific features enlighten us about the function of books and the way they were read of consulted, the new focus of interest for historians. This development signals new requirements for the retrospective databases, progressing from the general description of an edition towards the distinctive description of the elements that constitute the total.

2.2 In Spain the change in orientation within the history of the book coincides largely with the introduction of automation in the major libraries, favoured by political and economic changes. As a result a number of cataloguing projects, national and regional, were launched from the 1980s on. For details see the *Annual bibliography of the history of the printed book and libraries* (ABHB).

Improvement in library catalogues has led to a new form of mainly local bibliographies, presented in chronological arrangements to provide 'typobibliographies'. These lead to more general studies of printing and book-trade on a regional basis. Although the 'typobibliographies' have provided historians of the book with much more reliable information for insights on a national scale, it is to be regretted that none of them are available in electronic form.

3.1 There exists no standardization in the recording of copy-specific

features, at least not in Spain. The descriptions depend on *ad hoc* individual decisions.

Historians often find it difficult to consult retrospective databases, but when faced with copy description their confusion reaches its maximum. In retroconversion projects copy descriptions have usually remained untouched. Often such precious information was originally recorded in marginal notes on catalogue cards, bound to remain out of reach of scholars. The separate treatment of automated cataloguing and automation of library archives has prevented useful interaction between the two kinds of sources, which otherwise might have contributed to the history of copies.

3.2 The recording of copy-specific features can only be carried out within libraries. A local library, or smaller projects within a central initiative, are usually best placed to meet the historian's requirements. The UNIMARC format provides a satisfactory framework for the descriptions.

The most urgent task ahead is to establish a common terminology. For example, marginalia may be described as: interpretative, critical, structured or unstructured, corrections of the text, non-verbal signs, and ownership marks. Bindings should be classified unambiguously.

The history of copies can be enhanced by external information: former shelf-marks, early library inventories, auction catalogues and private library catalogues. Such investigations may well require support from a specialist historians, and perhaps it should be regretted that this type of research is no longer within the remit of libraries.

3.3 Based on the experience of the retrospective database (IBIS) of the Patrimonio Nacional, the author considers initiating the provision of further tools in the Biblioteca Real for improving knowledge of the collection as it is now and of the private libraries that are its constituent parts. She proposes:

- to develop a system for feedback between user and database. A form soliciting information is now distributed to users.
- to develop a system for feedback between users and library.
- to develop a database with images of owners' marks of the main collections: ex libris, manuscript notes, binders and binding tools.
- to analyze earlier catalogues and inventories for tracing the history of copies. In progress for incunabula.

# Quantification, National Heritage and Automation Strategy

HENRYK HOLLENDER

Quantification in cultural history is not of the same nature as quantification in economic history. The basic difference is that economic phenomena can be considered as discrete and counted as separate units, whereas cultural ones cannot. The cultural historian hardly ever deals with quantifiable units. But the historical evidence at the basis of research is by no means amorphous. Publishing facts, even from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, are better quantifiable than the acts of reading, while the history of ideas, for instance, has remained closed to any quantification at all. On the other hand, methods seem to emerge to use in the future quantification even in the history of ideas. When all (or just the major part of) the textual heritage is digitised, machines will be able to identify and organise frequent clusters of words and phrases, thus revealing patterns of written discourse invisible to the unaided bibliographical eye. By achieving this, we shall probably part company from publishing history as too dependent on the meaningless accidentality of having some written material collected for publication, to be subsequently included in collections or covered by bibliographies and catalogues. Words used in texts seem far better quantifiable than the texts themselves, whether we choose to deal with them as works, books, or imprints, or record them in bibliographies.

For the time being, however, we have to deal with bibliographies and catalogues and now we are in fact creating a major new one. Such sources are normally arranged by countries, languages, and institutions, introducing – as Dr. Amory puts it – ‘anachronistic definitions’. Whatever we might mean by terms like ‘Polish publishing output’ in terms of political and linguistic barriers, we seem to believe that it is a separate entity, worth singling out and comparing with other publishing outputs. If precise instruments are developed, Poland’s middle-sized publishing output may provide manageable evidence for comparative studies, in which the European heri-

tage overall may provide some kind of benchmark. By the time we may be able to review and analyse the entity called the European publishing output, the national publishing outputs should show us their uniqueness as close or distant variants of the former, perhaps as those branches of the tree on Estienne's printer's device adopted by CERL.

What are the research prospects the publishing output of a middle-sized, middle-textual country like Poland provides? We do have a comprehensive national bibliography, compiled by a nineteenth-century scholar.<sup>1</sup> If more books had been published in the past, it might have had to remain a superficial list, but since Poland produced between 1501 and 1830 only some 77,000 titles, *Bibliografia polska* resulted in a rich work, unsurpassed in detail and anecdote. It also records some books which seem no longer to be extant.

What tools do we have to analyze this single national heritage in its totality, whatever it is worth as a concept? Existing literature covers the sixteenth century much better than any other; we also have a catalogue of incunabula recording many books used in Poland at an early date.<sup>2</sup> One incomplete multivolume work describes in detail fifteenth-eighteenth century printers or printing institutions arranged by province, regrettably excluding Silesia.<sup>3</sup> Another major scholarly work considers Cracow's most important sixteenth-century presses, augmented with a Czech, Aleksander Augездеcky, who worked in Królewiec (Königsberg, Regiomontium) and Szamotuły (Samter). The work focuses on the variety of types and other printing material used by each printer.<sup>4</sup> Another work provides publishing statistics for the period 1501–1965.<sup>5</sup> Also available are works on the history of technical books in Polish, 1550–1850, on Roman Catholic liturgical books in the fifteenth to the end of seventeenth centuries, and on music printing by the end of the eighteenth century; to them can be added numerous works on printing in particular localities or by particular presses.

The relation of the structure of the whole output to the structure of holdings of any single library remains to be established, first of all of large libraries like the Warsaw University. Of our 150,000 hand press book items (out of a total of at least 1,200,000 in the research libraries of Poland) approximately 20%–30% were published in localities belonging at some time to Poland. The others reflect most of European printing in all its variety, including nearly 300 ESTC items previously unknown to ESTC.

We believed that integration of the (Polish) standard US MARC records for early imprints into the Warsaw University Library online catalogue will facilitate more research. The WUL has begun with nearly 2,000 records OCR converted from its printed fifteenth- and sixteenth-century catalogue<sup>6</sup>

and is determined to continue. The records are fairly full, but access points are only the standard VTLS OPAC set, – and that without classification and subject headings. For the actual conversion and recataloguing operations another file (ISIS) is maintained locally at the Library. It contains the identical number of records (and indeed, identical records) as the OPAC, but provides indexes to printers, places of printing, and *genre*, as well as copy-specific terms, which will provide access points to provenance data. Thus we hope to support our favourite aim, the study of book owners and users. These indexes, as opposed to the OPAC ones, are produced without authority control. They are still incomplete, as some information, like *genre*, was missing from the printed and card formats of the catalogue. This file is expected to serve expert users; when expanded, it may also be networked and eventually made available on the world-wide web. In a sense, by maintaining this file we are conforming with the traditional approach in Poland, where libraries, however modest their attempts at hand press book computerisation, firmly tend to avoid merging records for ‘old’ and ‘new’ items. It is yet to be discussed which of the two sister files (when complete as at least a sixteenth-century file of some 12,000 records) would make a better contribution to the HPB database as a CERL member’s file.

All in all, in a not too distant future, most of the publishing output of Poland – or any country like Poland – may be reflected not only by existing bibliographies, but also by online files of large libraries. Those files may well be merged in national or consortial union catalogues. A similar project for Poland is now in the preparatory phase.<sup>7</sup> Let us think of a possible development. Against a hand press book file, filtered out from the national union catalogue, we will have the CERL Hand Press Book File, compiled without any ‘national’ obligations, consisting of data from various libraries, which in terms of Polish history – or any other local history – make but a random choice.

What do we get now from studying the national component in the Hand Press Book file?

Complete selection of all the Poland-related records would require more research than what we have actually done. As a result of a period of trial access to HPB file, we retrieved 142 records in Polish or translated from Polish. The language and location information is incomplete. If we search for incunabula printed in Poland, we receive no hits, but when we ask for those from CRAC, we retrieve 8 records – not too bad. Disregarding any limitations of period. Cracow, the capital of Polish printing, produced 286 items, really few if compared with 1315 records for Breslau (and additional 26

for Wrocław), 410 for Danzig and Dantzig (plus 8 for Gdańsk), and 238 for Warsaw (including all the spellings). Now, high numbers for Gdańsk and Wrocław were probably caused by the fact that such a large proportion of HPB records are records from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, that is records of the institution which naturally must have given priority to largely German output of Danzig and Breslau. We cannot, however, exclude another reason: books printed in these two cities might have been more attractive to European audiences and the future 'ultimate' HPB file will show the same distribution of printing places.

This of course is a hypothesis, but one somewhat buttressed by distribution of authors. If we exclude Jan Kochanowski, a Renaissance poet and a major figure in Polish literature, whose 18 entries in the HPB file are mostly modern reprints, the leaders are Martinus Migeleki (16) and Joannes Glogoviensis (14), the former author of popular works on logic, the latter an astronomer. Both wrote in Latin, so it is not the language that made their printed works attractive to particular European libraries. Needless to say, they are not in vogue for historians of today, nor are they celebrated in Poland as outstanding scholars. Was there anything especially interesting, especially appealing in what they wrote, which made them attractive to institutional or private book collectors in countries like Germany or England?

By asking this question I would like to conclude that quantification is not only a tool in analyzing publishing output. It seems to promise as much – if not more – in the field of the study of book collections, revealing new patterns of taste, of interest, or flow of ideas in a cross-regional, perhaps cross-cultural, synchronic perspective.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karol Estreicher, *Bibliografia Polska*, 34 vols, New York, London, Johnson Reprint Corporation; Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Bohonos, *Incunabula quae in bibliothecis Poloniae asservantur, Moderante Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa; Composuerunt Maria Bohonos et Elisa Szandorowska*, 3 vols, Wratislavia, Offic. Inst. Ossoliniani, 1970–93.

<sup>3</sup> *Drukarze Dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku* (Printers of early Poland, of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries), vols. 1, 3–6, Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1959–1977.

<sup>4</sup> *Polonia Typographica saeculi sedecimi. Zbiór Podobizn Zasobu Drukarskiego Tłoczni Polskich XVI stulecia* (Collection of printing material from presses of Poland in the sixteenth century), 12 vols, Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1936–74.

<sup>5</sup> Maria Czarnowska, *Rozwój Ilościowy Polskiego Ruchu Wydawniczego 1501–1965* (Polish publishing output in numbers: 1501–1965), Warszawa, PWN, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Teresa Komender, *Katalog Druków XV i XVI w. w Zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie* (Catalogue of the fifteenth and sixteenth century imprints in the Warsaw University Library collections), 2 vols, Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1994; Teresa Komender, and Halina Mieczkowska, *Katalog Druków XVI wieku w Zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie* (Catalogue of the sixteenth century imprints in the Warsaw University Library Collections), 2 vols, Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1998. This work, has progressed to *Biblia* (Bible) and is far from complete. For the online equivalent, see <http://katalog.buw.uw.edu.pl>.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Andrzej Padzinski, 'An Automated Union Catalog for Polish Research Libraries: Design Proposals', in: Jadwiga Wozniak, and Robert C. Miller, eds., *Research Libraries: Cooperation in Automation, November 16–19, 1998, Cracow* [conference materials], Warsaw, Wydawnictwo SBP, 1999, pp. 49–56.

<sup>8</sup> The author is indebted to his colleagues, Marianna Czapnik and Halina Mieczkowska for most of the research for this communication.



# Le catalogage automatisé des livres anciens et recherches dans le domaine de l'histoire du livre: le cas de la République tchèque.

## Conception du traitement, son état actuel, perspectives d'avenir.

JAROSLAVA KAŠPAROVÁ

Permettez-moi, après une brève présentation de la conception du catalogage électronique dans la République tchèque, de résumer mes expériences de catalogueur et d'historien du livre.

Parmi les facteurs importants qui compliquent la situation actuelle du catalogage et surtout des recherches professionnelles, il faut citer notamment le manque d'une liste automatisée des livres anciens du pays (soit en fichier collectif, soit en catalogue électronique), l'existence d'une quantité de livres anciens pas encore catalogués, conservés dans les nombreuses institutions du pays, la non-existence d'un centre méthodique de la coordination, ainsi que la création spontanée de catalogues électroniques isolés, ne respectant ni les règles de la description standard, ni les formats d'enregistrement et d'échange courants; quelquefois même manque de catalogueurs professionnels et de la technique nécessaire.

Malgré les faits négatifs, les fondements du catalogage automatisé ont été jetés et il existe de bonnes conditions pour son développement favorable. La conception du catalogage automatisé, préférant la description des documents bien détaillée faite avec le livre en main, peut renouer avec le haut niveau du catalogage classique.

La Bibliothèque nationale de la République tchèque, après la création du programme spécial de catalogage des livres anciens (système ALEPH, format d'enregistrement UNIMARC, règles ISBD(A) combinées avec les règles nationales) permettant d'établir notices brèves ou détaillées, avec la possibilité de quelques formats de représentation et d'impression, teste son

fonctionnement dans une base spéciale. C'est une base appelée *Base STT 1501-1800* (Base des livres anciens 1501-1800). Elle fait partie du catalogage électronique de la Bibliothèque nationale. Elle utilise les zones internationales de l'UNIMARC (zones 1-8) et aussi la zone 9 du format 'national', notamment sur les données sur les particularités d'exemplaires – provenance, reliure, les sujets d'illustrations, d'ornements, etc. Le programme travaillant cependant en régime expérimental, unit la banque des données textuelles et celles d'images numérisées. Le catalogage des livres non repérés, catalogage des livres du seizième siècle et naturellement des livres patrimoine national – c'est à dire, des livres tchèques, soit imprimés en tchèque, soit tchèques par auteur, par lieu d'édition ou par contenu – représentent notre premier but dans le catalogage futur.

La Bibliothèque nationale offre aussi aux usagers ses fichiers classiques numérisés, celui des livres anciens y compris. Mais ces fichiers électroniques, classés par nom d'auteur ou par titre, restent en forme classique: on peut les feuilleter, fiche par fiche, et trouver une information élémentaire importante (cote, adresse bibliographique, collation et quelquefois provenance) – mais c'est tout. Leur transformation éventuelle en base de données structurées ne sera pas facile. Si elle est faite automatiquement, il existe un grand danger que le résultat sera pitoyable. Il y a des fiches de différente qualité, quelques-unes même d'avant 1900, erronées, incomplètes; il y a des pertes dont les fiches ne rendent pas compte, etc. A mon avis, il serait plus expédient de procéder à un recatalogage, livres en main.

La philosophie du catalogage automatisé des livres anciens de la Bibliothèque nationale de la République tchèque est très proche à celui de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie des sciences (malgré les systèmes et formats d'enregistrement différents), respectant les normes, offrant le maximum d'informations supplémentaires si elles sont demandées par les utilisateurs et chercheurs (p.ex. données sur les types d'illustrations et notes sur les particularités d'exemplaire) et permettant l'interrogation en ligne par de nombreux points d'accès, les consultations d'images numérisées, ou l'accès aux sous-bases des données plus détaillées ou spéciales (typographiques, p. ex.).

La création du catalogue collectif des livres anciens conservés dans la République tchèque représente malheureusement un avenir aussi lointain que nécessaire. Mais ce qui est réconfortant, c'est le fait que les normes ISBD(A) et l'utilisation du format d'échanges UNIMARC (malgré les formats d'enregistrement différents) commencent à être peu à peu acceptés par les autres institutions importantes, propriétaires des fonds historiques, p.ex. la Bibliothèque du Pays morave de Brno, la Bibliothèque scientifique d'État

d'Olomouc, les Archives de la ville de Prague et quelques bibliothèques des musées régionaux.



La qualité du travail des chercheurs du domaine de l'histoire du livre est bien influencée par l'existence des catalogues électroniques contenant notices de valeur, bases capables de rapides interrogations et d'échanges d'information, aux critères nationaux et internationaux. Je suis pour la participation plus active des chercheurs au catalogage. Le catalogage représenterait une symbiose du travail des catalogueurs et celui des chercheurs. Les catalogueurs seraient aussi des chercheurs en histoire du livre, offrant les résultats de leur catalogage au public professionnel. Les chercheurs, au contraire, faciliteraient le travail de ceux-ci, en leur donnant les informations traitées en synthèses complètes, sous forme de dictionnaires, de précis de l'histoire du livre ou de manuels pratiques.

Les catalogueurs, en préparant la base de données pour les chercheurs, mettent les résultats de leur travail à leur disposition. Évidemment, ils tâchent de le faire au mieux, mais leurs connaissances sont limitées (quelquefois parfaits, une autre fois faible), ils doivent cataloguer nombre de livres, très souvent ils cataloguent par routine, ils font des fautes (mon Dieu, ils ne sont ni polygraphes ni polyglottes!), ils travaillent isolés ou en équipe d'un petit nombre de personnes (trop petit!), ils doivent affronter la critique de chercheurs étroitement spécialisés faisant des exploitations des catalogues électroniques. Leur position n'est pas facile. Mais dans n'importe quelle situation, leur travail ne doit pas perdre le moment créatif. Voilà une réponse à la question pourquoi le catalogage peut exercer une grande attraction sur nous catalogueurs, pourquoi il peut devenir notre passion. Les catalogueurs ont une 'double nature', et cette condition les incite à déployer des efforts enthousiastes. Les catalogueurs sont à la fois ravis par les résultats de leur travail, et déçus par lui. Comme catalogueurs nous sommes fiers de préparer une base de données fonctionnelle, comme chercheurs nous ne sommes pas satisfaits – on ne peut pas trouver notre information assez rapide et détaillée. Il y a quelque temps, j'ai cherché des informations sur les éditions complètes des comédies de Pedro Calderón dans la base électronique de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Espagne, pour identifier deux manuscrits précieux en espagnol en provenance de la Bibliothèque du château de Mladá Vozice, fameuse par les découvertes des textes inconnus de Calderón, pour trouver leur titre précis et leur texte imprimé de la fin du dix-septième siècle. Alors, j'étais en position de chercheur, d'usager de la base, et j'ai été très mécontente de ne pas pouvoir trouver l'in-

formation que je cherchais. Malgré le fonctionnement long de la base, tombant très souvent en panne (mais c'est le malheur général des bases électroniques, la nôtre y compris!), j'ai fini par accéder aux notices, sans obtenir mon information. La description était trop brève à mon goût, sans répartition détaillée du contenu, bref, impossible de trouver la comédie en question. Le chercheur en moi a commencé se plaindre du catalogueur en moi, tandis que le catalogueur a défendu le catalogage de la base de la Bibliothèque de Madrid (à propos, c'est une des meilleures, j'ai de bonnes expériences avec elle). Mais ce qui est évident, c'est le fait que la base de données (en forme classique, ou électronique) ne représente qu'une source primaire, un point de départ pour les historiens du livre, source de leur 'inspiration créative' si je peux dire, pleine de données concrètes à analyser, à synthétiser. Les historiens du livre ne peuvent pas formuler d'hypothèses valables sans informations solides, notamment pour ce qui est des sujets jusqu'à nos jours peu étudiés (p. ex. questions de la histoire de la lecture, du marché du livre, du voyage de livres).

Les catalogues électroniques structurés ne reflètent qu'une somme de connaissances humaines (parfaites ou imparfaites), ils représentent une base de données ouverte, inachevée, variable de jour en jour, mais base fondamentale pour l'histoire du livre. On se demande souvent si les documents numérisés peuvent substituer aux matériaux originaux. Naturellement non. Les originaux sont uniques, avec leur existence spécifique, sans doute. Mais les catalogues électroniques peuvent les représenter en réalité virtuelle, pourvu qu'elle corresponde bien à son modèle. Ils peuvent même offrir des informations supplémentaires sur l'existence des documents originaux. Parfois, les catalogues peuvent même servir de moyen pour mieux connaître les originaux en toute leur complexité. Voilà les motifs pour le catalogage le meilleur possible. Sans catalogue abondant en données, fonctionnel et bien accessible, le travail des chercheurs reste pénible. Sans textes de référence de toute sorte, sans une aide de la part des chercheurs le travail des catalogueurs reste pénible. Voilà, on tourne dans un cercle vicieux. . . Quelle solution? A mon avis, elle est très simple: plus de compréhension l'un pour l'autre, plus de coopération ouverte, sans formalité, entre les deux côtés. Très simple en théorie, très difficile en pratique.

Les historiens du livre et les catalogueurs poursuivent le même but: à l'aide de la création du catalogue automatisé collectif (européen, national ou mondial) le plus complet et le plus fonctionnel possible, permettant l'accès aux documents décrits (non seulement en réalité virtuelle, mais aussi en livres concrets) contribuer à la connaissance la plus approfondie possible de l'histoire culturelle de l'humanité.

SUMMARY

At present there is not yet a national catalogue of early books in the Czech Republic, either in the form of a card catalogue or an electronic system, and very many books, dispersed over many different institutions, still remain uncatalogued. There is no centralised coordination, while isolated, individual projects arise randomly, without regard to rules or standards, let alone exchange formats, sometimes even carried out without professional cataloguers with the necessary technical skills.

In spite of these unfavourable circumstances a beginning has been made. The National Library of the Czech Republic is creating the *Base STT 1501-1800* (in UNIMARC, according to ISBD(A) rules) which allows various levels of cataloguing, and can include copy-specific features. Experiments are underway with linking records with digitised images. The primary focus is on books printed in what is now the Czech Republic, by Czech authors and in the Czech language.

The National Library offers to users its alphabetical, electronic catalogue. It can be browsed item by item, providing shelf-marks, collation, bibliographical references and sometimes provenance notes, but the data are not stored as a structured database. Since the quality of the records is very uneven, a conversion would be difficult. In the author's view, the library would be better advised to re-catalogue this material book-in-hand.

The concept of automated cataloguing of early books in the National Library is very close to that practiced in the Library of the Academy of Sciences, although they use different systems and formats. Both respect standards, provide as much additional information as possible if it is deemed useful for scholars (e.g. information on illustrations and copy-specific notes) and give on-line access with many entry points and links with digitised images and specialist files (e.g. typography).

The prospect of a union catalogue of early books in the Czech Republic has unfortunately to be relegated to the distant future. It is encouraging, however, to note that gradually ISBD(A) standards and the UNIMARC exchange format begin to be adopted by many of the major institutions that have early collections, for example in Brno and Olomouc as well as Prague.



The work of students of the history of the book is much influenced by the availability of electronic databases with valuable records. I would argue for encouraging active participation of scholars and experts in the work of the cataloguers. There should be exchange of information. Cataloguers cannot be expected to be experts in every kind of book they record. Cataloguers are therefore a species with a dual nature – proud of their achievements and at the same time disappointed: the database works, but not fast enough, nor

with enough detail. I speak from personal experience: Some time ago I searched for information on the complete editions of the comedies of Pedro Calderón, I consulted the electronic database of the National Library of Spain in order to identify the text of two manuscripts in terms of editions of the late seventeenth century. I was displeased not to find the information I needed, because for my purpose the descriptions were too short, without analysis of contents. The scholar in me complained to my other self, the cataloguer, while the cataloguer in me would be ready to defend the catalogue of the BNE as one of the best. It should be made clear, however, that the database can serve only as a primary source and point of departure. On the other hand, the primary material is indispensable for the book historian. The case for cooperation between cataloguers and historians is in theory a simple solution, but its realization is difficult.

# Bibliography and woeful ignorance – or, Why does the seventeenth century look different in Cambridge libraries?

DAVID McKITTERICK

For anyone working on continental European books (i.e. excluding those printed in the British Isles) in the sixteenth century, the catalogue of those in the libraries of the University of Cambridge is as familiar as it is essential. It was prepared by my predecessor as Librarian of Trinity College, the late H. M. Adams, who put us all further in his debt by insisting on including collational formulae besides the conventional details of author, title and imprint. He covered not only the main University Library, but also the colleges and the departmental libraries.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the number of sixteenth-century books in Cambridge has grown very considerably, with the especially notable additions of the library of Peterborough Cathedral,<sup>2</sup> many of the early books from Ely Cathedral, and the entire library of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The bequest of the late F. J. Norton (d.1986), bibliographer of Spanish and Portuguese printing between 1501 and 1520, helped to make the University Library one of the richest in the world for such books.<sup>3</sup> Norton also collected other continentally-printed books of the same period and these, too, came with his bequest.

However, in Cambridge as in so many other libraries, the seventeenth century is less well-travelled. Here, like Adams when he began to record the sixteenth century, we must confess to 'woeful ignorance', although, as I will show, the situation is slightly more cheerful even than it was five years ago. Besides the University Library and the faculty libraries, there are thirty college libraries of which perhaps fifteen – the oldest – may be said to have early printed books in significant numbers (Trinity, St John's, Emmanuel, King's, Magdalene, Sidney, Peterhouse, Pembroke, Corpus, Gonville and Caius, Jesus, St Catharine's, Queen's, Christ's, Clare). In addition, the Fitzwilliam Museum contains an exceptional library of early printing. In some

of the college libraries, the collections are quite focussed: the sixteenth-century books of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury (d.1575), in Corpus, or the overwhelmingly English books in the library of Samuel Pepys (d.1703) in Magdalene.<sup>4</sup>

If we look at the history of these libraries, we may begin to focus on the seventeenth century more precisely. First, the University Library itself.<sup>5</sup> When in 1715 King George I presented the library of John Moore, Bishop of Ely (d.1714), the University not only gained what was accounted the best private library of its day, one of the few libraries in England with a European reputation, but also saw its overall holdings treble. Moore possessed probably about 30,000 books, from the 8th century onwards; not surprisingly, most were from the seventeenth century.

Moore's books joined those of Richard Holdsworth, who possessed probably the largest private library in England at the time of his death in 1649. Outside the University Library, the closest intellectually to these men was that of William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury (1617–93), whose books are now in Emmanuel College. I shall return to Trinity College, St John's College, which today has the third-largest collection of seventeenth-century books in Cambridge, owes most of its riches to two men: John Williams (Archbishop of York; 1582–1650) and Thomas Baker (antiquary; 1656–1740).<sup>6</sup>

For England, as for Europe, the focus of libraries had shifted by the mid-seventeenth century. Whereas in the sixteenth century Cambridge libraries were largely preoccupied with the Protestant Reformation, in the seventeenth century the emphasis moved away from theology to philology, natural philosophy, mathematics, medicine, classical scholarship, politics and, very noticeably, neo-Latin literature. The obvious and fundamental question arises immediately, for Cambridge libraries as for all British libraries at this time: what of modern languages?

Very few libraries can be said to be characteristic of their period, in the sense that they accord with the overall output from the publishing trade of their time. By themselves, library statistics are a poor guide to printing and publishing as a general issue. Few libraries have even representative collections of cheap or popular literature.<sup>7</sup> So many books survive in only one, or in very few, copies, that frequently we can manage little more than informed guesses and estimates of what has been lost. Simply as a record of output, libraries must therefore be treated with some circumspection. The Cambridge libraries are further unrepresentative of the trade (however representative they may be of learning in academia) in that they are concerned with



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either the preoccupations of current teaching and research, or they tend to rely on donations or (especially) bequests from people of like minds and similar interests.<sup>8</sup>

For such reasons, modern languages tend to be under-represented in collections donated during the seventeenth century, though this has since been made good in a somewhat patchy way. The most familiar modern languages in seventeenth-century England were French and Italian, and some Spanish. German was rare. Dutch, though so close both geographically and politically, was also rare. The principal collection of books in French and Italian to enter the University Library in the seventeenth century came from Henry Lucas, a politician who died in 1663 and who spent some time in exile with Charles II. Trinity College acquired very substantial holdings of Italian books (especially) right at the end of the century, as a result of the gift by Sir Henry Puckering (d.1701) of his entire family library. These came from two periods: the first years of the century, when his predecessors had played host to the exiled Giacomo Castelvetro, and from the mid-1630s, when Puckering had been on the Grand Tour, and bought numbers of books on his journeys. Partly as a result, the Cambridge figures for French and Italian are biased towards the first half of the century, and the vernacular holdings for the second part are less representative in the context of the European book trade as a whole.

If we look at later collections, the absolute number of books goes up; but the character of the collection changes less than might have been expected, and for different reasons. For example, the library of the great historian Lord Acton was presented to the University in 1902.<sup>9</sup> It contains about 60,000 volumes, and hundreds of these still have slips from old booksellers' catalogues, cut up and inserted as bookmarks by Acton. Much of his library was collected in Germany (Acton's family came from England; he was educated partly in Paris and Munich; and he remained a close friend of Johann J. Döllinger, in Munich). As a liberal Catholic, he was present at the First Vatican Council, and criticised it strongly. His library reflects his heavy buying in Catholic Europe. But he took little interest, at least so far as we can judge from his books, in vernacular imaginative literature. His purposes were historical, and he concentrated to outstanding effect on ecclesiastical and political history. His collections of local history, across Germany, Switzerland, France and Italy in particular are remarkable. He collected periodicals and newsbooks systematically, from the seventeenth century onwards.

In other words, when we compare the Cambridge collections with, for

example, those in the British Library, we find a very distinct voice: the combined voice of collectors quite different from the principal figures on whose libraries the British Library itself is founded. There has been only one major metropolitan collector amongst Cambridge benefactors: metropolitan in the sense that he lived, worked and collected mainly in London. This was John Moore, who died in 1714. There has been no collector from the fashionable circles of antiquaries and bibliophiles who patronised the Roxburghe auction sale of 1812, who benefited at first hand from the bibliographical diaspora of Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe, and who followed in the steps of Dibdin and his tastes in the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Oxford has its Francis Douce (1757–1834).<sup>11</sup> In London, the British Museum counted amongst its benefactors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a group of people with fundamentally very similar interests. Headed by George III (d. 1820), these included C. M. Cracherode (1730–1799), Charles Burney (1757–1846), and (most notably, perhaps) Thomas Grenville (1755–1846).<sup>12</sup> While each had individual characteristics, much of their collections overlapped, and much was conveniently bibliophile, educated by tastes developed in and by the London trade. The closest figures Cambridge produces for comparison with such people before the mid-nineteenth century is Lord Fitzwilliam (1745–1816), founder of the Fitzwilliam Museum. His collections of the French Revolution are outstanding,<sup>13</sup> but those of seventeenth-century books are comparatively small in number. In the mid-century, we have William Grylls (d. 1863), a little-known collector who deserves further study. He came from a West Country family, and on his death left the choice of his library to Trinity College, which thus acquired some 288 incunabula, mainly from Italy and Germany – about 40% of all those now belonging to the College. Grylls had his large-paper copies of Dibdin's influential manuals of bibliophily; he bought heavily at the Libri sales in London; he had a taste for illustrated books; and like others of his generation he understood more of the sixteenth than of the seventeenth century. In many ways he was utterly conventional, and it is a measure of this conventionality when set against the other libraries of Cambridge that he had what are still the only copies in Cambridge of many books regarded as cornerstones of bibliographical taste in the generation educated by Brunet's *Manuel*.

So much by way of background. What of the statistics? Adams described just over 30,000 different titles and editions from the sixteenth century, many of course held in multiple copies. Since then, the number of sixteenth-century continental books in Cambridge libraries has risen to per-

haps 35,000. No such detailed account exists for their seventeenth-century successors. The only books to have been surveyed so far in a systematic manner are those of Italy, in the union list compiled by Wyn Evans and Roberto Bruni.<sup>14</sup> They recorded over 5,700 Italian books in Cambridge libraries from the seventeenth century.

The two largest libraries of early books, the University Library and Trinity College, now have major retrospective cataloguing projects in hand, both available on the Web.<sup>15</sup> The Fitzwilliam Museum is already completed. The University Library has so far recatalogued about 8% of its pre-1976 holdings, sufficient for it to be possible to make a reasonable estimate not only of the total likely to emerge but also to look in a preliminary way at its geographical and chronological distribution. Basing our estimates on work already completed, it is probable that there are something over 70,000 seventeenth-century *editions* (in many more *copies*) in Cambridge University Library itself, from all countries of Europe, including Britain. Of these, there are well over 8,000 from France, over 6,500 from Germany, about the same from the Low Countries, and almost 6,000 from Italy. Since, on the basis of actual counting, we know that this estimated Italian figure is rather high, I must emphasise that we should also be cautious about the others. Changing geographical boundaries (quite apart from error in inputting the data) mean that these figures are not absolute; but they give us the first rough guide we have ever had.

Compared with the figures for the British Library, these are puny. The British Library, for example, has over 26,000 seventeenth-century German books alone,<sup>16</sup> and about 130,000 from Italy.<sup>17</sup> Anna Simoni's catalogue of books from the Low Countries, 1601–21,<sup>18</sup> lists over 4,500, compared with perhaps 800 from this period in the University Library.

However, these differences are less dramatic once we look at the colleges as well. I will take the overall figures first.

If we look at duplication between all Cambridge libraries and the British Library, then we find some remarkable dissimilarities. A preliminary comparison with the British Library's German books suggests not only that there are many books represented in Cambridge but not in London, but even that perhaps 40% of the seventeenth-century German holdings just of Trinity College are books not in the British Library. Here we face statistical difficulties. Trinity College is not noticeably strong in seventeenth-century German vernacular texts, but in the seventeenth century it had a succession of benefactors, all members of the college, who took a particular interest in neo-Latin verse. This material, some of it of a very occasional and even

ephemeral kind, has certainly helped to warp the comparison. It is also probable that the scientific and mathematical holdings for this period are stronger than those in London.

But, interestingly, we find very similar proportional differences if we look at Italian books overall, in all the Cambridge libraries. Of just over 5,700 items recorded by Evans and Bruni in Cambridge libraries (a total that excludes Hebrew books), just 2,689 are in the British Library: ie, almost 53% of the books in Cambridge are not in the British Library.

Furthermore, the vast majority of Italian seventeenth-century books held in these Cambridge libraries are recorded in just a single copy, the largest holdings after the University Library itself being Trinity College and Emmanuel College (where, as I mentioned earlier, the library of Archbishop Sancroft is a heavy presence). Of the copies (rather than editions) held in Cambridge, the University Library holds just 59%.

In sum, and very approximately, we may guess that there are at least 140,000 seventeenth-century printed books in Cambridge, and very much more if we take duplication into account: I have, for example, not sampled British books, where the rate of duplication is (unsurprisingly) quite high.

I now turn, briefly, to chronological analysis and to some of its difficulties. Clearly, there is a primary difficulty in comparing like with like. For example, the most readily available figures for seventeenth-century Paris, prepared with all due caution in the 1960s by Henri-Jean Martin and repeated in the *Histoire de l'édition française*, are based on the printed catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, incomplete at the time of his writing and not including anonymous works.<sup>19</sup> Only in Britain are there reasonably comprehensive chronological records for the national printed output, as Maureen Bell shows elsewhere in this collection.<sup>20</sup> But even those are not really comprehensive, since they inevitably omit much minor and popular printing that has disappeared completely. As I have already emphasised, this kind of printed matter is, notably, not characteristic of our major national and university libraries, which have been founded on traditions of learning and bibliophily for which popular literature tends to be a stranger and for which ephemera or administrative printing holds little interest.

Nonetheless, if we compare the pattern of Martin's figures (which he checked against several other sources) with those of Cambridge University Library, we find elements both in common and in contradistinction. For example, the Cambridge figures (which are for France as a whole) and the Paris figures concur on a very considerable increase in the 1640s; but

whereas Martin found a peak in the 1660s, in Cambridge there seem actually to be a slight drop during these years; this may be because there is a hiatus in the two major private collections on which the University Library relies for this period: between the death of Holdsworth in 1649 and the beginning of active collecting by Moore in the 1680s. Curiously, too, the figures for the 1690s are very similar to those for the 1660s, whereas Marin recorded a falling-away in the last three decades of the century.

For Italy, the Cambridge University Library estimate may be compared decade by decade with figures for the British Library analysed by Marco Santoro.<sup>21</sup> Here (I speak only in numbers) we find a much higher proportion in Cambridge libraries in the first decade of the seventeenth century; much lower ones in the 1640s and 1650s; and an even more noticeable tailing-off at the end of the century than we find in the British Library. In the 1690s, the British Library records a little less than half the number for the 1600s; Cambridge records just 15%. The Cambridge figures record a decline in Italian books during the 1680s and 1690s, which is to be expected. But it is a surprise to find that in the 1690s Dutch editions also slipped back when compared with the 1680s: there is, clearly, a reflection here of collectors rather than of the book trade.

How, then, may we sum up how Cambridge may be said to be different? Like most other libraries, the Cambridge libraries depended during this period not on the purchase of new books, as they were published, but on bequests. Only by a continuing series of bequests was a coherent continuity achieved in the accumulation of books year on year, generation on generation. Inevitably, there are gaps in this procession of will-makers. The interests of benefactors were broadly similar, and as a consequence there was much duplication. But even a quite small gap between generations could produce significant statistical differences that were not necessarily to be made up by subsequent generations. I have spoken of the peculiar flavour of these collections – scholarly rather than popular, under-representative of most modern languages. I might also have mentioned other differences, such as the heavier presence of educational texts in the college libraries, as distinct from the University Library. This was the direct result of a tendency for benefactors in the eighteenth century to leave their books to their colleges, rather than to the University. In navigating amongst the collections, a sense of their development is essential. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century retrospective collectors did not collect in the same way that contemporaries accumulated.

Though there are many and notable exceptions, the seventeenth century has tended to attract less bibliographical energy than the sixteenth, a situa-

tion that is now, at least, changing rapidly. The preliminary figures that are emerging are subject to much correction.

But, perhaps most of all, they stand to be corrected once we consider more deeply what is being measured. In conclusion, I turn briefly from these tentative statistics to glance also over our shoulders, at our reasons for such a pursuit, and to remind ourselves of its beguiling, and even fallacious properties. In the seventeenth century, arrangements for publication, shared costs, editions divided between towns and even countries, shared printing, publication in multiple formats, and publication in different groupings – separately or with shared title-pages – all became ever more complicated. In that complexity there is a warning. Library catalogue entries, and even entries in major retrospective bibliographies, frequently – perhaps usually – bear only incidental relevance to the practicalities of the trade, its manufacturing capacity, its investment capacity, or its sales capacity. As we estimate the size of our library holdings, it is vital also to remember how, why, by whom and for whom the books in question were published and intended. By doing so, we will make better catalogues, adjust our course and perhaps avoid the worst pitfalls of what we might call the anti-historical tendency in some of the assumptions of retrospective bibliography.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Adams, *Catalogue of books printed on the continent of Europe, 1501–1600*, in *Cambridge libraries*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1967); H. M. Adams, 'A catalogue of sixteenth-century foreign printed books in Cambridge', *The Library* 5th ser. 10 (1955), pp. 79–85.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Hall, *Peterborough Cathedral Library: a catalogue of books printed before 1800 and now on deposit in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> His own copies are recorded in F. J. Norton, *A descriptive catalogue of printing in Spain and Portugal, 1501–1520* (Cambridge, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> N. A. Smith, *Catalogue of the Pepys library of Magdalene College*. 1. *Printed books* (Cambridge, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> The standard histories are J. C. T. Oates, *Cambridge University Library; from the beginnings to the Copyright Act of Queen Anne* (Cambridge, 1986) and David McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library; the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Frans Korsten, *A catalogue of the library of Thomas Baker* (Cambridge, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> The standard national bibliographies are A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475–1640*. 2nd ed., revised by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson and Katharine F. Pantzer. 3 vols. (London, 1976–91), and Donald G. Wing, *Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641–1700*. 2nd ed. 4 vols. (New York, 1982–98).

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For one study of cheaper (and now very elusive) literature, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap print and popular piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1991); English popular printed ballads of the seventeenth century may be usefully studied in facsimile in *The Pepys ballads*, ed. W. G. Day. 5 vols. (Cambridge, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Compare the lists of books in private houses in Cambridge during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in *Books in Cambridge inventories; book-lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court probate inventories in the Tudor and Stuart periods*, ed. Elisabeth Leedham-Green. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1986) But even these post-mortem inventories do not include the cheapest books of all.

<sup>9</sup> The most recent biography is Roland Hill, *Lord Acton* (New Haven, 2000); for his library, see also Owen Chadwick, 'The Acton Library', in *Cambridge University Library; the great collections*, ed. Peter Fox (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 136–52.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour de Ricci, *English collectors of books and manuscripts (1530–1930), and their marks of ownership* (Cambridge, 1930).

<sup>11</sup> *The Douce legacy; an exhibition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the bequest of Francis Douce (1757–1834)*, (Oxford, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> The most recent, and fullest, history is P. R. Harris, *The British Museum Library* (London, 1998); see also Arundell Esdaile, *The British Museum Library; a short history and survey* (London, 1946).

<sup>13</sup> *Paris, city of revolution*, ed. Jane Munro and David Scrase, Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> D. Wyn Evans and Roberto Bruni, *Italian 17th-century books in Cambridge libraries; a short-title catalogue* (Firenze, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Via <<http://www.cam.ac.uk>>

<sup>16</sup> David Paisey, *Catalogue of books printed in German-speaking countries and of German books printed in other countries from 1601 and 1700 now in the British Library*. 5 vols. (London, 1994). Also available on-line in the Hand Press Book database. Compare these figures with about 100,000 in VD17 (*Verzeichnis der in deutschen Sprachgebiet erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts*). But note that the bibliographical basis of VD17 is somewhat different from that for the Cambridge figures, which are based on geographical area rather than on language.

<sup>17</sup> *Catalogue of seventeenth century Italian books in the British Library* 3 vols. (London, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Anna E. C. Simoni, *Catalogue of books from the Low Countries, 1601–1621, in the British Library* (London, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> *Histoire de l'édition française*, ed. H.-J. Martin and Roger Chartier. 4 vols. (Paris, 1983–6) 2. *Le livre triomphant*, pp. 95–6. For a more self-confident view, see Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, Anette Smedley-Weill and André Zysberg, 'French book production from 1454: a quantitative analysis,' [*sic*] *Library History* 15 (1999), pp. 83–98.

<sup>20</sup> See above.

<sup>21</sup> Marco Santoro, *Storia del libro italiano; libro e società dal quattrocento al novecento* (Milano, 1994), pp. 174–6.

<sup>22</sup> In preparing this, I am particularly grateful to Adrian Miller of Cambridge University Library, to Stephen Parkin of the British Library, and to Hugh Amory for his healthy skepticism.

# Les banques de données bibliographiques: cartes routières ou instruments de recherche pour l'histoire du livre au xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle

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Le 11 décembre 1789, à l'issue de la Révolution dite 'brabançonne', une armée patriotique parvint à faire fuir les troupes et les autorités autrichiennes installées à Bruxelles. La politique de réforme de l'empereur Joseph II avait révolté la population des Pays-Bas autrichiens. La libération de Bruxelles fut le réel point de départ d'un épisode durant lequel les Pays-Bas méridionaux constituèrent pour la première fois – et très brièvement – une république indépendante, les 'États belgiques unis'. On peut lire la relation des événements bruxellois dans un pamphlet rédigé en néerlandais et imprimé à Bruxelles peu après les faits, le *Nauwkeurig verhael van de verovering der stad Brussel door haere inwoonders* (trad. 'Récit exact de la prise de la ville de Bruxelles par ses habitants').<sup>1</sup>

Les événements de 1789 et 1790, leurs antécédents et leurs suites, engendrèrent et excitèrent une véritable explosion de publications pamphletaires. Le succès de ce genre littéraire à la fin du dix-huitième siècle, en Belgique comme ailleurs, fait naître une question à laquelle les historiens du livre ne parviennent pas à fournir de réponse nette et sans équivoque: celle de la relation entre le tirage original d'un imprimé et le nombre d'exemplaires qui en subsistent dans les collections actuelles. De façon intuitive, on pourrait affirmer que l'existence actuelle d'un nombre relativement élevé d'exemplaires d'un même imprimé doit être interprété comme un indice certain pour l'ampleur du tirage original. Récemment, une recherche a été conduite sur les catalogues de ventes publiques de livres à Anvers durant la seconde moitié du dix-huitième siècle.<sup>2</sup> Il en ressort que le catalogue imprimé dont subsistent le plus d'exemplaires à ce jour, est celui de la collection du comte Charles de Proli (Anvers: J. Grangé & J. F. de Bock, 1785), collection privée la plus importante ayant été vendue à Anvers à l'époque. L'ampleur et la



qualité de cette bibliothèque laissent prévoir qu'un grand nombre d'amateurs et de bibliophiles assisteraient à sa vente. Dès lors, l'imprimeur a imprimé et distribué un nombre maximal de catalogues de vente, ce qui explique pourquoi on en trouve encore tant aujourd'hui, non seulement en Belgique mais aussi à l'étranger. À l'inverse pourtant, et surtout pour ce qui concerne les publications éphémères (pamphlets de toutes sortes et catalogues de ventes publiques, mais aussi almanachs, thèses défendues au sein des universités. . .), certains historiens ne manquent pas de faire remarquer que le nombre extrêmement restreint qui en est conservé aujourd'hui, est inversement proportionnel au nombre d'exemplaires ayant quitté l'atelier typographique. Il existerait une loi selon laquelle les imprimés ayant été lus par le plus grand nombre de lecteurs dans le passé, sont aujourd'hui les plus rares.<sup>3</sup> Pour revenir à l'enquête concernant les catalogues de ventes publiques de livres à Anvers, nous avons retrouvé la trace de 748 ventes publiques de 1750 à 1800. Pour 514 d'entre elles, nous avons la certitude qu'un catalogue a été imprimé: des annonces dans le journal anversoï principal de l'époque l'attestent. Mais jusqu'à ce jour, nous n'avons retrouvé que 346 catalogues, c'est-à-dire tout au plus 67% du nombre de catalogues ayant réellement été publiés à l'époque.

Il s'agit là d'une question de première importance, puisqu'elle concerne tant la production que la diffusion et (surtout) la réception des textes imprimés. Le nombre d'exemplaires imprimés à l'origine peut être un indice du succès commercial d'un texte, du nombre de lecteurs qui l'ont eu sous les yeux et donc de l'influence qu'il a exercée. Il est évident que parmi les imprimés à caractère éphémère s'est opéré un tri sévère dès le moment de leur première lecture. À ce sujet, il suffit de prendre en considération nos propres 'usages de l'imprimé' commercial, électoral ou même d'information. On peut pourtant se demander si le paradoxe de la quasi-disparition des imprimés ayant été 'reçus' par le plus grand nombre de lecteurs ne provient pas – en partie du moins – de problèmes techniques et purement bibliothéconomiques. Souvent en effet, bon nombre de ces imprimés éphémères ne sont pas conservés dans les bibliothèques, mais plutôt dans les dépôts d'archives et les musées, surtout les musées régionaux et communaux; le catalogage électronique des imprimés y demeure souvent en retard par rapport aux pratiques des bibliothèques et à l'inventarisation de documents administratifs et manuscrits. Pour ce qui est des bibliothèques, si la rétroconversion ne s'y opère pas le livre en main, de longues séries de publications éphémères réunies en recueils factices peuvent échapper au catalogue électronique, tout comme elles étaient absentes des fichiers d'an-

tan. Même s'il procède livre en main, le catalographe peut trouver rébarbatif le catalogage de longues séries de menues brochures réunies souvent dans de gros volumes, retardant ainsi la progression 'physique' du traitement d'une grande collection; dans le procès de rétroconversion, il ne leur donnera pas souvent la priorité. Finalement, vu la description trop superficielle d'un imprimé, on ne remarque pas toujours les détails qui permettent de faire la distinction entre deux tirages séparés. Pourtant, deux exemplaires à première vue semblables mais provenant de tirages distincts, peuvent être révélateurs d'un succès plus important que s'il s'agit de deux exemplaires réellement identiques, issus d'un même tirage.

Voilà donc une belle ambition: recenser par le biais d'une collaboration bibliographique internationale, le plus d'exemplaires réellement identiques d'imprimés à caractère populaire ou éphémère. Le recensement des *exemplaires*, dans ce cas, est au moins aussi important que la constitution d'un corpus de *titres*. Dès lors, qu'est-ce que les dix-huitiémistes étudiant les innombrables pamphlets et autres imprimés éphémères aimeraient voir se réaliser? Trois choses à mon avis.

1. Une stratégie qui permette de prendre en compte le plus de collections possibles, y inclus les musées et dépôts d'archives dont on sait qu'ils contiennent de nombreux imprimés.<sup>4</sup> Il serait bon de les encourager à rétrocataloguer leurs collections, et de leur rendre plus abordable (financièrement) l'accès aux banques de données du CERL.

2. Une action qui progresse rapidement mais qui soit néanmoins suffisamment précise afin de considérer le plus de détails possibles caractérisant un tirage déterminé. Il faut ici trouver le juste milieu entre précision et progression. Ainsi, le scanning des pages de titre ou des ornements typographiques est une technique qui permet de compléter rapidement la description bibliographique classique.

3. Une banque de données visant non seulement à représenter le plus vite possible la totalité des *titres* ayant paru en Europe avant 1830, mais également à informer au maximum du nombre d'*exemplaires* ayant survécu.

Construite de cette façon – et je ne crois pas avancer ici des vues bien originales ou surprenantes – la banque de données *Hand Press Book* sera plus qu'une carte routière me renseignant sur l'endroit où me rendre pour consulter un imprimé bien déterminé ou sur le nombre de titres issus d'un atelier typographique quelconque: ce sera un réel instrument de recherche me permettant de sonder l'importance commerciale d'imprimés qui furent peut-être moins éphémères qu'on ne l'a cru jusqu'à présent.

On objectera peut-être que les travaux du Consortium ne visent qu'à

combiner et à coordonner des catalogues préexistants; la construction première de ces catalogues ressort de la responsabilité des institutions scientifiques participant au programme du CERL. À ce sujet, j'en conviens, la Belgique laisse beaucoup à désirer. Il fut un temps où ce pays pouvait s'enorgueillir de différentes initiatives visant à répertorier la production typographique nationale. La plupart d'entre elles étaient issues de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, qui renfermait en son sein le Centre national de l'archéologie et de l'histoire du livre. Je pense surtout à la *Belgica typographica* d'Elly Cockx-Indestege, Geneviève Glorieux et Bart op de Beeck, recensant les imprimés publiés dans les limites de la Belgique actuelle de 1541 à 1600, et faisant suite à la bibliographie des post-incunables par Wouter Nijhoff et Maria Elizabeth Kronenberg.<sup>5</sup> Ce travail, malheureusement, n'a pas connu de prolongement, de sorte que la production imprimée des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles demeure en grande partie *terra incognita* en Belgique. Il est significatif que le principal outil de référence postérieur à la *Belgica typographica*, le *Short-title Catalogue of books from the Low Countries* pour les années 1601 à 1621, ait été compilé par Anna Simoni, à la British Library.<sup>6</sup>

Ce n'est que petit à petit que certaines instances se laissent convaincre de la nécessité de remédier à cette situation. Il est bien malheureux que la Bibliothèque royale ne dispose plus à présent des moyens pour continuer l'entreprise, bien à l'inverse du rôle de premier plan joué par exemple par l'institution-soeur des Pays-Bas à La Haye, qui a accueilli en son sein le STCN (*Short Title Catalogue, Netherlands*) et qui continue de faire parler d'elle en construisant Bibliopolis, un merveilleux instrument de recherche électronique pour l'histoire du livre des Pays-Bas. Ce n'est pas ici le moment de rechercher les causes de cette disproportion entre Bruxelles et La Haye. Je voudrais plutôt terminer par une note plus optimiste et profiter de l'occasion pour annoncer à un public intéressé qu'un projet de bibliographie rétrospective est quand même en chantier. Il doit beaucoup au dynamisme des responsables du STCN hollandais, et c'est ce qui nous a incités à le baptiser STCV: *Short Title Catalogus, Vlaanderen*.

Né de la collaboration plus ou moins étroite entre quelques-unes des principales bibliothèques universitaires de la partie néerlandophone de Belgique, il part d'une inspiration explicitement pragmatique. En effet, une entreprise visant à retrouver et à répertorier par voie électronique tous les imprimés produits en Belgique aux dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles ne peut être organisée qu'en suivant des étapes bien définies. La première de ces étapes, pour laquelle une demande a été introduite auprès du Fonds de la recherche scientifique de la communauté flamande de Belgique, consisterait

en l'inventarisation de tous les imprimés du dix-septième siècle publiés en néerlandais dans les limites de la Flandre actuelle, et conservés dans les bibliothèques universitaires d'Anvers, Gand et Louvain ainsi que dans l'ancienne bibliothèque municipale d'Anvers.<sup>7</sup> Le travail s'effectuerait principalement d'après le modèle du STCN hollandais, pour lequel cette première phase constituerait un supplément qu'il recherche depuis longtemps. Pour la Belgique, le STCV pourrait être le point de départ d'une entreprise à long terme tendant à ranger ce pays, doté d'un patrimoine typographique tellement riche, parmi les contrées bibliographiquement civilisées. Si ce premier projet est mené à bon terme, on peut facilement imaginer les étapes suivantes du projet: la description d'autres collections (bibliothèques et dépôts d'archives) et – ce qui est probablement plus important encore – l'enregistrement de documents rédigés en d'autres langues que le néerlandais. De cette façon, le *Nauwkeurig verhael van de verovering der stad Brussel*, publié le 19 décembre 1789, s'avèrera être la traduction néerlandaise d'une *Relation exacte de la prise de Bruxelles par ses habitants*, publiée quatre jours plus tôt, le 15 décembre 1789.

<sup>1</sup> Sur la révolution brabançonne, voir entre autres les *Actes du Colloque sur la Révolution brabançonne 13–14 octobre 1983*, édités sous la direction de J. Lorette, P. Lefevre & P. de Gryse, Bruxelles, 1984 (Centre d'histoire militaire. Travaux, 18). Un joli choix de pamphlets et de caricatures de l'époque illustre la réédition par J. Vercruysse & E. Collet du classique de S. Tassier, *Les démocrates belges de 1789*, Bruxelles, 1989. D'autres publications sont recensées dans *Des révolutions à Waterloo. Bibliographie sélective d'histoire de Belgique (1789–1815)*, sous la direction de C. Bruneel, Bruxelles, 1989 (Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique. Numéro spécial 36).

<sup>2</sup> P. Delsaerd & D. Vanysacker, 'Repertorium van Antwerpse boekenveilingen 1750–1800', in: *De Gulden Passer*, 75 (1997), p. 5–119.

<sup>3</sup> J. Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd. De almanak en het dagelijks leven in de Nederlanden 1500–1700*, Zwolle, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> L'inventaire des pamphlets du Musée royal de l'armée à Bruxelles démontre bien la richesse de certaines collections moins connues: R. Gahide, *Inventaire des pamphlets de la Révolution brabançonne conservés au Musée royal de l'armée*, Bruxelles, 1985 (Centre d'histoire militaire. Inventaires, 26).

<sup>5</sup> W. Nijhoff & M. E. Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540*, 's-Gravenhage, 1923–1971; E. Cockx-Indestege, G. Glorieux & B. Op de Beeck, *Belgica typographica 1541–1600. Catalogus librorum impressorum ab anno mdxli ad annum mdc in regionibus quae nunc Regni Belgarum partes sunt*, Nieuwkoop, 1968–1994 (Centre national de l'archéologie et de l'histoire du livre, ii).

<sup>6</sup> A. E. C. Simoni, *Catalogue of books from the Low Countries 1601–1621 in the British Library*, London, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Un mois après la présentation de cet exposé à la conférence du CERL, le project STCV fut approuvé par le 'Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen'. Le 1<sup>er</sup> février 2000, deux chercheurs ont entamé les travaux. Leur adresse: Joost Depuydt & Goran Proot, Bureau STCV, p/a Bibliothèque centrale de l'UFSIA, Université d'Anvers, Prinsstraat 9, B-2000 Anvers. Le projet bénéficie également d'une subvention de la 'Nederlandse Taalunie'.

#### SUMMARY

A pamphlet entitled *Nauwkeurig verhael van de verovering der stad Brussel* relating the recent events round the 'liberation' of Brussels from the Austrian regime on 11 December 1789 is the author's point of departure. The pamphlet, in Dutch, is one of an explosion of small pamphlets set off in that turbulent time, in Belgium as elsewhere. The proliferation of such printed material in the closing years of the eighteenth century gives rise to a question that is difficult to answer:

Is there a relation between the size of the original print-run and the number of copies that are still extant? The intuitive response is that a large number of surviving copies might indicate that the number of copies originally printed had been large. A recent investigation of public book-auction catalogues (of auctions held in Antwerp 1750–1800) would seem to confirm this. Much interest was expected for the most important collection sold in that period, and a large number of copies of the catalogue were printed and distributed. They can still be found in Belgium and abroad. On the other hand, the argument can also be reversed. It is thought that especially for ephemera like pamphlets on topics of the day, almanacs, theses defended at universities, the rate of survival is proportionally inverse to the number that had been printed. One might even formulate a law that the larger the number of its readers in the past, the greater the rarity of a document now. As to the Antwerp catalogues: of 748 public auctions that could be documented for the period 1750–1800, we know that for at least 514 a catalogue was printed, but it was possible to find copies of these catalogues of only 346 auctions, or 67% of the catalogues that were once produced.

The rate of survival is an important issue, for it touches on production, dissemination and in particular on reception. The original print-run can be taken as an indicator of the commercial success of a text, of the extent of its readership and therefore of its influence. Ephemera, however, obviously were often discarded as soon as they were first read.

Nevertheless, the apparent paradox of the non-survival of the material that had had the widest use may perhaps at least partly be explained by factors to do with librarianship. Many ephemera are not found in library collections but in archives or local museums, especially regional and muni-

cial museums. In such institutions automated cataloguing projects run well behind those of libraries and archives and printed materials usually get a low priority rating. As to libraries, unless cataloguing is carried out book-in-hand, long sequences of ephemera gathered in large volumes can escape the electronic catalogue, just as they used to elude the card cataloguer. And even when cataloguing takes place book-in-hand, the cataloguer may find that the large volumes consisting of many tiny items slow him down. In a retroconversion programme they will not be high on the list of priorities. Finally, details revealing the distinction between issues may get overlooked, although they are more important witnesses of the impact of a document than two identical copies would be. From this point of view, the recording of copies is at least as important as the recording of lists of editions.

Three items the student of eighteenth-century pamphlets and other ephemera would put on a list of desiderata:

1. To make a point of including as many collections as possible, not excepting museums and archives known to have considerable collections of printed works. They should be encouraged to (re)catalogue their collections, perhaps by making access to the CERL database (financially) possible.
2. To strike a balance between rapid progress and detailed and precise cataloguing. Modern technology, e.g. the scanning of title pages or typographical ornaments should support accuracy in distinguishing editions and issues.
3. The database should have as objective to record not only all editions printed in Europe before c.1830, but also to provide information on as many copies as possible that are still extant.

With these objectives the HPB database will be more than a guide towards the locations of a particular book or the output of a particular press. It would become a research tool which allows to gage the importance of printed matter that may perhaps have been less ephemeral than has until now been thought.

One may object that the Consortium's remit is only to combine and coordinate cataloguing projects that exist already. The creation of these catalogues is in the first instance the responsibility of the institutions working with CERL. The Royal Library of Belgium has unfortunately not been able to continue its excellent record of service, which includes *Belgica Typographica*, describing books printed within present-day Belgium in the period 1541-1600, thus constituting a sequel to Nijhoff-Kronenberg's bibliography of post-incunabula of the Low Countries. The only reference work covering a period later than *Belgica Typographica* is the British Library's short-title

catalogue of books printed in the Low Countries 1601–1621, compiled by Anna Simoni.

It is therefore the author's pleasure to end on a more optimistic note and to announce the launch of the electronic *Short-title catalogue Vlaanderen*. It will include all books printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in modern Belgium. It will be a staged project, its first stage covering all seventeenth-century books in the Dutch language now in the libraries of the universities of Antwerp, Ghent and Louvain, as well as the municipal library of Antwerp. The cataloguing formats will largely be modelled on the Dutch STCN, which it will complement. Following stages are to include other collections and even more important the recording of books in languages other than Dutch.

Thus it will at last become obvious to the researcher that the *Naauwkeurig verhael*, bearing the date 19 December 1789 was in fact a translation from the French *Relation exacte de la prise de Bruxelles*, which was published four days earlier, on 15 December 1789.

# Le Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires de la BnF (v. 1500–v. 1810): premiers enseignements quantitatifs et qualitatifs

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## 1. HISTORIQUE DU 'PRODUIT' ET EXIGENCES DE DÉPART

Le *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires* de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) – dont voici le dernier état sous forme papier, paru en 1997 – est né il y a près de quinze ans de la convergence de deux besoins devenus de plus en plus sensibles dans nos bibliothèques de recherche:

1. la nécessité, bibliothéconomique, d'affiner le catalogage et d'en proposer une indexation plus riche et plus fiable grâce aux fichiers d'autorité permis par l'informatique.
2. l'exigence, scientifique, d'un accès aux matériaux de première main pour un nombre croissant de chercheurs et d'amateurs intéressés par l'histoire du livre, l'histoire de l'édition et la bibliographie matérielle.

Les bibliothèques patrimoniales de référence, et la Bibliothèque nationale de France en particulier, s'étaient en effet avisées que grâce aux adresses (*imprints*), aux achevés d'imprimer et aux particularités d'exemplaire, elles étaient depositaires d'une multitude d'informations sur les producteurs et les diffuseurs du livre. Informations jusque-là inexploitées ou sous-exploitées par le catalogage classique, et pourtant essentielles aux avancées de l'histoire du livre – rappelons que dans la plupart des grands catalogues de référence, seuls sont transcrits de l'adresse la localité de publication, l'initiale du prénom et le nom du libraire ou imprimeur, à l'exclusion d'autres mentions telles que titulatures, adresses et enseignes précises. À ce gisement d'informations, les chercheurs et amateurs ne pouvaient donc avoir aussi directement et massivement accès que les conservateurs et bibliothécaires eux-mêmes. De sorte que, de plus en plus, la question du repérage



de ces données est apparue cruciale. Les index des catalogues rétrospectifs d'une part – et ici je pense bien sûr aux STC –, les fichiers d'imprimeurs et de lieux d'édition d'autre part – dont on sait qu'ils se sont par exemple généralisés dans les grandes bibliothèques françaises à partir des années 1970 –, ont été une première réponse à ce constat de manque. Mais ces instruments de travail étaient, et sont encore, notablement insatisfaisants en égard aux attentes de spécialistes de plus en plus exigeants, parmi lesquels je compte naturellement nous-mêmes. Ces outils, même les plus en vue (le fichier de la Réserve des imprimés de la BN par exemple), étaient en effet parsemés d'erreurs d'identification, de mauvaises lectures, de rapprochements hâtifs d'homonymes, de pseudonymes non dévoilés, de doublons par non-rapprochement de formes variantes (par ex. Du Puy et Puteanus, Estienne et Stephanus, pour ne citer que les négligences les plus classiquement flagrantes), etc. Sans même parler du manque de précision entourant les dates d'activité et les adresses successives des personnages répertoriés, qui apparaissent cependant essentielles à une identification et une datation pertinentes, c'est-à-dire à des tâches parmi les plus quotidiennes des catalogueurs et des utilisateurs du livre ancien.

Si l'on voulait rendre fiable et efficace ce repérage des artisans du livre, il fallait pousser le travail d'identification mais aussi de normalisation, à partir des formes rencontrées dans les ouvrages eux-mêmes; il fallait même rendre autonome ce travail – essentiel en contexte livre ancien – vis-à-vis de la chaîne du catalogage proprement dit, quitte à y sacrifier du temps.

Dans le cadre du *Catalogue des ouvrages anonymes anciens* lancé par la Bibliothèque nationale après l'achèvement du *Catalogue général auteurs* en 1981–1982, le service de l'Inventaire général s'est très tôt préoccupé de ce complément à apporter à ses tâches traditionnelles de catalogage. De fait, l'information du catalogue, prévue d'emblée, impliquait une indexation irréprochable, non seulement en matière de titres secondaires et d'auteurs, mais aussi d'imprimeurs/libraires et de lieux d'édition. Au départ, toutefois, il ne s'agissait encore que de perfectionner une indexation. Pour cela, un fichier manuel et interne pouvait suffire. Pour chaque occurrence d'imprimeur ou de libraire, une recherche sommaire, portant essentiellement sur les formes onomastiques et sur les dates biographiques et d'activité, était effectuée dans les principaux ouvrages de référence disponibles pour chaque pays ou lieu d'édition. Les éléments résultant de la recherche donnaient lieu à une fiche normalisée, qui servait d' 'autorité' pour le traitement éventuel d'autres occurrences. Comme on l'imagine, ce fichier de simple identification s'est rapidement étoffé, et les informations que l'on y a centralisées se sont

accrues et affinées. Ayant à identifier des imprimeurs/libraires de moins en moins connus et à démêler des homonymes de plus en plus obscurs, les responsables de ce travail ont recouru à des sources de plus en plus poussées en matière d'histoire des métiers du livre en France et à l'étranger. Peu à peu ils se sont constitué un fonds d' 'usuels' comptant plusieurs centaines de références; ils ont effectué en complément des dépouillements d'ouvrages du fonds général imprimé, de fichiers internes et de documents d'archives conservés au département des Manuscrits. Et cette phase de 'butinage' puis de 'capitalisation' leur a permis de se rendre compte qu'à l'occasion d'un tel travail ils avaient collecté et mis en uvre en les croisant des sources souvent peu exploitées, ou peu accessibles aux chercheurs et à bien d'autres bibliothèques d'étude. Parmi ces sources et ces outils, j'inclus d'ailleurs le CD-Rom de conversion rétrospective des catalogues et fichiers de la BnF, disponible depuis 1996, qui constitue en soi un remarquable instrument de repérage. Les notices qui avaient pris forme à partir des fiches initiales apportaient des informations désormais structurées aptes à rendre bien des services par elles-mêmes, sans nécessairement en exploiter les liens avec les notices bibliographiques. Autrement dit, cette somme de travail valait sans doute la peine d'être mise à la disposition des catalogueurs et du public, et cela sous une forme plus riche que celle d'un index ou même d'un *thesaurus*.

La première étape dans cette voie a consisté à intégrer les données stockées par le fichier manuel au fichier d'autorité informatisé de la base BN-Opale qui se mettait alors en place. Le tout en évitant la déperdition d'informations de l'un à l'autre et en conformant les données ainsi versées à la structure normalisée des notices d'autorité en format InterMarc (A). Cela a donné lieu à l'élaboration d'un *Guide pour la rédaction des notices d'autorité imprimeurs/libraires en format InterMarc*, publié en 1987 et destiné à encadrer cette délicate procédure – sur ce préalable technique je me contente ici de renvoyer au contenu même du *Guide*. Toujours est-il qu'à partir de la phase de chargement qui a suivi, les notices du service devenaient accessibles à d'autres collègues au sein de la Bibliothèque nationale et, progressivement, à d'autres bibliothèques partenaires du même réseau.

Elles commençaient en quelque sorte à 's'exporter' et à rendre en ligne des services ponctuels hors du contexte de notre *Catalogue des anonymes anciens*. Mais la décision, prise d'un commun accord avec le service informatique de la BN, de publier en un *corpus* les notices déjà disponibles dans ce cadre limité, a donné une nouvelle dimension à notre travail. Qu'il soit manuel ou informatisé, le fichier n'était jusque-là qu'un outil interne, destiné avant tout

aux catalogueurs maison; à partir de sa première publication en un *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires*, en 1988, il franchissait la 'barrière domestique'; il se fixait *ipso facto* des ambitions plus larges, celles de rendre des services à distance aux professionnels des bibliothèques, mais aussi aux libraires, aux spécialistes et aux amateurs de livres anciens en France et à l'étranger.

## 2. DE L'APPROCHE QUALITATIVE À LA DYNAMIQUE QUANTITATIVE: UN 'REDEPLOIEMENT' ET SES AMBIGUÏTÉS

À partir du moment où notre production faisait l'objet d'une publication, sa finalité même s'en trouvait nécessairement modifiée. La petite équipe chargée du fichier d'imprimeurs/libraires avançait jusque-là sans trop se préoccuper de savoir quel vaste puzzle chaque notice traitée permettait de compléter. Bien évidemment, certaines thématiques retentissaient mécaniquement sur la composition de notre *corpus*. Ainsi le catalogage des ouvrages anonymes anglais du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle nous fournissait abondamment en imprimeurs et libraires de Londres; de même, le traitement des anonymes italiens du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle nous obligeait à davantage de répondant en ce domaine. Plus tard, le traitement des catalogues de libraires antérieurs à 1810 nous amenait à insister sur la librairie parisienne, alors que pour le catalogage des catéchismes diocésains français nous devons mettre l'accent sur les petits ateliers provinciaux des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles.

Dans l'ensemble, cependant, l'avancement de l'entreprise de catalogage, obéissant à une logique principalement alphabétique, donc aléatoire, les services à attendre de notre *corpus* pouvaient du même coup paraître eux aussi aléatoires à un public potentiel désormais élargi. Nous en étions par avance bien conscients. Mais à ce vice originel nous ne voyions que deux types de correctif à apporter:

1. tenter d'anticiper sur les besoins de nos utilisateurs extérieurs en ciblant mieux notre progression – mission difficile voire impossible, faute de *feed-back* suffisant, et du fait aussi de la charge de travail à assumer quotidiennement au service de nos collègues.

2. miser sur l'effort quantitatif et sur notre productivité relative, afin d'offrir assez rapidement une couverture significative à l'échelle de la France et éventuellement de l'Europe.

Cette dernière solution nous a paru plus réaliste compte tenu de la pression des besoins courants, compte tenu également de l'évolution thématique du catalogage à l'Inventaire à partir de 1991, avec le traitement notamment des catalogues de libraires antérieurs à 1810 et des catéchismes diocésains, trai-

tement qui nous a permis de renforcer la représentation des imprimeurs et libraires français, tant parisiens que provinciaux.

Tel quel, dans ses versions cumulatives successives – 1,000 notices en 1988, 2,000 en 1991, 4,000 en 1997, quelque 5,200 aujourd'hui –, le *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires* a rencontré quoi qu'il en soit un succès encourageant. Succès éditorial d'abord, puisque, de 1988 à 1997, chacune de ses parutions a été épuisée dans l'année ou sur deux ans. Succès d'estime ensuite car nous avons reçu quantité de témoignages positifs sur le caractère pionnier de l'entreprise, sur la qualité des notices présentées ou sur la richesse des sources mises en uvre. Cela dit, des collègues et des utilisateurs des deux voire des trois premières publications nous ont aussi fait part de leur étonnement ou même de leur sentiment de frustration en n'y voyant pas traité tel ou tel imprimeur célèbre ou proche de leurs centres d'intérêt. Ils en étaient parfois d'autant plus surpris qu'ils pouvaient découvrir *a contrario*, en feuilletant le *Répertoire*, de bien obscurs représentants des métiers du livre, je pense particulièrement à la foule des petits imprimeurs parisiens de l'époque révolutionnaire. Nous avons beau leur expliquer alors que notre produit dépendait étroitement d'un travail interne de catalogage en cours, que le *Répertoire* n'en était au fond conçu que comme l'index séparé et enrichi, et qu'il était donc normal qu'il n'offre pas, du moins pas encore, toutes les ressources souhaitables, nous n'étions pas certains de parvenir un jour prochain à satisfaire les attentes légitimes du public en la matière. Notre tâche journalière et prioritaire consistait à établir les notices d'autorité de nos collègues catalogueurs, et nous n'étions pas trop de deux personnes à plein temps pour nous en acquitter. L'ancrage obligé de notre travail et sa charge nous interdisaient ainsi de modifier fondamentalement la conception du *Répertoire*. Restait à espérer qu'en continuant à avancer à un rythme soutenu, nous puissions un jour répondre aux besoins d'une majorité d'utilisateurs à l'extérieur comme à l'intérieur de l'établissement.

Les premiers comptes rendus et réactions à l'édition de 1997 nous ont en quelque sorte encouragés dans cette voie tout en nous aidant à situer notre prestation. Dans *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* (n° 68, 1997), par exemple, Mme Cockx-Indestege dressait certes un constat comparable au nôtre quant aux inconvénients. À savoir que notre *corpus* toujours provisoire pouvait apparaître comme 'un pêle-mêle' et que peut-être il aurait mieux valu organiser la matière 'par pays', autrement dit en fonction des centres d'intérêt de nos utilisateurs étrangers potentiels. Mais elle reconnaissait implicitement qu'agir ainsi nous aurait en fait coupés de notre mission première et interne, au service du catalogage livre ancien accompli à la Bibliothèque

nationale de France. Aussi saluait-elle en la matière 'l'approche pragmatique de la BnF' qui, disait-elle, avait 'le grand avantage d'exister et d'en faire tirer profit par les collègues de par le monde'. Comme par ailleurs Mme Cockx se félicitait qu'en raison du parti adopté 'la France et plus particulièrement Paris soient bien représentés', nous nous sentions d'autant plus confortés dans notre démarche, sans ignorer toutefois les imperfections qu'elle pouvait comporter. De même María Luisa López-Vidriero, dans les *Arivos* de la Bibliothèque royale d'Espagne (n° 12, avril-juin 1998), rattachait notre entreprise aux missions mêmes des bibliothèques nationales, en rappelant combien il est essentiel que les institutions abritant les collections les plus significatives s'emploient à 'créer les instruments de la recherche bibliographique'. Quitte à ce que de telles entreprises apparaissent toujours inachevées et puissent ponctuellement engendrer quelque frustration. En l'occurrence nous lui sommes d'autant plus reconnaissants de sa bienveillance que les imprimeurs et libraires espagnols, et plus généralement hispaniques, sont encore bien trop peu représentés dans notre *Répertoire* – nous en sommes conscients.

Cela dit, cette dernière édition nous a valu quelques *satisfecit* quantitatifs, celui en particulier des *Nouvelles du livre ancien* (n° 95, été 1998), qui, loin de déplorer l'importante proportion de notices françaises (près de 45%), invitait les rédacteurs à en aligner désormais les séries, en 'offrant des filiations complètes' pour chaque dynastie parisienne ou provinciale traitée. D'autres utilisateurs directs, comme nos collègues de la Réserve de la Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, à Paris, nous prodiguaient parallèlement leurs encouragements, en nous assurant même qu'ils trouvaient dans notre *Répertoire* la grande majorité des notices dont ils avaient besoin pour identifier les éditeurs des ouvrages anciens rencontrés au cours de leurs tâches de catalogage.

### 3. DU DÉFI QUANTITATIF À CELUI DE LA REPRÉSENTATIVITÉ?

Si l'on se réfère à ces témoignages, dès lors que l'on a accepté la logique du travail en cours qui est la nôtre, la problématique qui subsiste n'est peut-être pas tant celle de la quantité traitée que celle de la représentativité du *corpus*. Pour s'en faire une idée tant soit peu objective, jetons un coup d'il sur l'évolution de ce *corpus* entre 1991 et 1999, en fonction de deux critères simples mais majeurs aux yeux de nos utilisateurs:

- la répartition par nationalités (actuelles) représentées
- la répartition par siècles

À première vue, ces tableaux nous livrent deux grands enseignements quant

1. RÉPARTITION PAR NATIONALITÉS DES IMPRIMEURS/LIBRAIRES (1501-1810)  
 TRAITÉS, 1991-1999

	1991 Répertoire... (2 000 notices)	1997 Répertoire... (4 000 notices)	1er juin 1999 base BN-Opale (5 000 notices)	Coefficient d'accroissement 1991-1999 × 2,5
1. France	687 (34,3%)	1 771 (44,2%)	2 592 (51,8%)	3,8
2. Allemagne	346 (17,3%)	509 (12,7%)	531 (10,6%)	1,5
3. Grande-Bretagne	321 (16,0%)	507 (12,7%)	531 (10,6%)	1,6
4. Italie	145 (7,2%)	366 (9,1%)	427 (8,5%)	2,9
5. Pays-Bas	140 (7,0%)	257 (6,4%)	280 (5,6%)	2
6. Belgique	78 (3,9%)	143 (3,6%)	159 (3,2%)	2
7. Suisse	57 (2,8%)	137 (3,4%)	143 (2,8%)	2,5
8. Espagne	113 (5,6%)	131 (3,2%)	137 (2,7%)	1,2
9. Irlande	30 (1,5%)	41 (1,0%)	43 (0,8%)	1,4
10. Suède	20 (1,1%)	23 (0,5%)	23 (0,4%)	1,1
11. États-Unis	16 (0,8%)	22 (0,5%)	23 (0,4%)	1,4
12. Danemark	9 (0,4%)	18 (0,4%)	20 (0,4%)	2,2
13. Autriche	8 (0,4%)	15 (0,3%)	17 (0,3%)	2,1
14. Portugal	6 (0,3%)	10 (0,2%)	10 (0,2%)	1,6
15. Pologne	1 (0,05%)	2 (0,05%)	9 (0,2%)	9
16. République tchèque	5 (0,2%)	5 (0,1%)	5 (0,1%)	1
17. Inde	1 (0,05%)	2 (0,05%)	2 (0,04%)	2
18. Pérou	1 (0,05%)	2 (0,05%)	2 (0,04%)	2
19. Hongrie	0	1	1 (0,02%)	
20. Slovaquie	0	1	1 (0,02%)	
21. Sri Lanka	1	1	1 (0,02%)	
Indéterminés*	15 (0,7%)	36 (0,9%)	44 (0,9%)	2,9

\* Notamment pseudonymes collectifs et personnages à nationalités multiples

2. RÉPARTITION PAR SIÈCLES\* 1997-1999

	XVe	XVIe	XVIIe	XVIIIe	XIXe
<i>Répertoire...</i> , éd. 1997	50 (1,2%)	766 (19,1%)	1 537 (38,4%)	2 235 (55,9%)	593 (14,8%)
BN-Opale, état 1er juin 1999	59 (1,2%)	857 (17,1%)	1 821 (36,4%)	2 937 (58,7%)	858 (17,1%)

\* On a comptabilisé chaque siècle représenté dans le cas d'imprimeurs/libraires ou d'offices ayant exercé sur deux ou plusieurs siècles.

à la composition évolutive du *corpus*. En termes de nationalité, la dominante française s'accroît continuellement d'une étape à l'autre, tant en valeur absolue qu'en données relatives. Aujourd'hui, plus de la moitié des 5,000 notices publiées sont françaises contre un tiers des 2,000 notices d'il y a 8 ans. La représentation de l'ensemble des autres nationalités recule en valeur

relative, à l'exception de la Pologne, qui est passée de 0,05% à 0,2%, et du groupe des indéterminés, qui stagne à 0,9%. En valeur absolue, en revanche, on note presque partout un accroissement. Mais, s'il est sensible dans le cas de la France, qui a quasiment quadruplé ses effectifs depuis l'édition 1991, et de la Pologne, qui les a multipliés par neuf, il est généralement inférieur à la progression d'ensemble pour les autres nationalités, sauf en ce qui concerne l'Italie et les indéterminés (qui ont pratiquement triplé leur part) ainsi que pour la Suisse, dont la croissance ( $\times 2,5$ ) est égale à celle de l'ensemble du *corpus*.

En matière de répartition chronologique, on assiste à une polarisation comparable autour du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui confirme sa prééminence depuis la dernière édition en approchant les 60%. Tandis que l'on note une stagnation en valeur relative pour le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle et un léger recul pour les XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup>. Seul le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle accroît sa représentation proportionnelle, finissant par dépasser celle du XVI<sup>e</sup> alors qu'en principe nous ne prenons en compte, je le rappelle, que les imprimeurs/libraires ayant commencé à exercer avant 1810.

Au vu de ces premières données chiffrées et des centres de gravité (France, XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle) qui s'en dégagent si nettement, la tentation est grande d'esquisser ce que l'on appelle communément en histoire quantitative une 'pesée globale'. Pesée globale qui serait censée nous livrer, siècle par siècle, une géographie enfin objective des métiers du livre à l'âge artisanal, au moins en Europe.

Pour notre part cependant, et dans l'état actuel de notre progression, nous nous refusons à ce genre d'extrapolation. Et ce pour deux raisons au moins. En premier lieu, rien ne nous indique clairement à quelle étape nous nous situons de notre entreprise. Lorsque nous nous y sommes engagés, voici plus de douze ans, nous avions cru pouvoir un jour atteindre un seuil où nous finirions par avoir toujours affaire aux mêmes 'grands' imprimeurs/libraires ou du moins à une majorité d'entre eux. Un seuil autrement dit où le travail de mise à jour et d'affinage finirait par l'emporter sur le traitement *ex-nihilo*, à partir des premières occurrences fournies par nos collègues catalogueurs. Or ce palier est à peine en vue en ce qui concerne les libraires parisiens de la période corporative (XVII<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle), dont le repérage est pourtant le plus aisé et la fréquence d'apparition la plus significative. Non seulement nous ne 'plafonnons' donc pas, mais notre fichier de base, qui comporte à la fois notices définitivement traitées et saisies et fiches provisoires manuelles, recense environ 8,000 entrées, soit un reliquat de près de 3,000 imprimeurs/libraires à résorber et à intégrer prochainement au *corpus* du *Répertoire*. Même à l'échelle des seules collec-

tions anciennes de la BnF, nous ne sommes pas là, on le voit, d'avoir réponse à tout. Et la représentativité vis-à-vis d'un quelconque *terminus ad quem* est donc loin d'être acquise. Pourrions-nous considérer la tâche achevée à 10 000, à 15 000 imprimeurs/libraires répertoriés? Ce n'est pas certain, surtout si l'on se fonde sur l'exemple français du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. En effet, d'après les évaluations aimablement procurées par nos collègues des Archives nationales, le fonds très officiel des brevets d'imprimeurs et de libraires de la période 1810-1870 comporte quelque 40 000 dossiers individuels. C'est à dire l'ordre de grandeur sur lequel il faudrait peut-être tabler rétrospectivement si l'on voulait être complet. . . Signalons en outre que les travaux en cours de Roméo Arbour, qui ne portent que sur les femmes libraires ou imprimeurs de 1470 à 1900, répertorient déjà près de 10,000 représentantes françaises.

On ne peut *a fortiori* juger représentatives les proportions relevées jusqu'ici à partir de notre *corpus*. Qui nous dit en effet que notre matière première, à savoir le fonds ancien de la BnF, présente un reflet fidèle de la production imprimée internationale et même française de la période 1501-1800? L'expérience prouve au contraire que les collections anciennes de la BnF, malgré la mise en place précoce du dépôt légal français et le formidable accroissement lié aux confiscations révolutionnaires, sont loin de pouvoir prétendre à une quelconque exhaustivité, même en matière de production nationale. À l'appui de cette remarque je n'invoquerai qu'un exemple, celui de Rouen, que je connais bien pour l'avoir étudié de près, et qui me semble particulièrement éloquent. Dans cette ville, la deuxième de France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle au plan démographique comme au plan éditorial, on produit entre 1601 et 1700 plus de 5,700 éditions (au moins 7,500 si on y ajoute les pièces et impressions de moins de 30 pages), dont environ 40% seulement comptent au moins un exemplaire conservé à la BnF; pour le même siècle, les effectifs des métiers du livre rouennais totalisent quelque 650 professionnels, dont seuls 70 (soit moins de 11%) sont actuellement pris en compte par notre *Répertoire*. Or, je le rappelle, Rouen n'est situé qu'à 120 km de Paris; ses publications sont soumises au dépôt légal, à la législation des privilèges royaux et à tout l'appareil théorique de la centralisation mis progressivement en place par la monarchie absolue. Ce simple constat doit nous inviter à une modestie permanente dans l'appréciation de la richesse de nos collections anciennes et des enseignements quantitatifs à en tirer. Car tout porte à croire qu'une fiabilité bien moindre encore est à attendre de nos collections étrangères anciennes, dont l'accroissement n'a jamais reposé sur un dépôt légal à prétention exhaustive. Certains pays, comme l'Espagne et le Portugal, ont



même pu souffrir à cet égard, avant le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, de préjugés défavorables, qui ont nettement pesé sur leur représentation dans nos collections.

#### 4. ENJEU QUALITATIF ET ENJEU DE PROXIMITÉ

Il est indéniable en tout cas qu'au vu de telles données, l'humilité nous soit commandée. Cela dit, le découragement n'est pas nécessairement de mise devant l'ampleur du déficit entrevu. D'abord parce que nous n'avons pas à rester prisonniers de l'espèce d'illusion de l'exhaustivité qui a pu prévaloir jadis dans nos bibliothèques nationales. Ensuite parce que la représentativité des *corpus* que nous proposons au public – si représentativité il doit y avoir –, nous ne sommes après tout pas tenus de la rechercher hors des seules collections dont nous avons la charge, avec toutes leurs lacunes, excroissances et déséquilibres par rapport à une configuration idéale, quelle qu'elle soit. La vérité de notre travail de professionnels des bibliothèques doit résider avant tout dans la familiarité et la proximité vis-à-vis des collections qui nous sont confiées, à savoir, en ce qui nous concerne plus particulièrement, dans le catalogage livre en main, l'identification des exemplaires au coup par coup, la connaissance intime des ressources présentes sur place. Privilégier cette démarche, c'est partir de l'existant, même limité, et laisser pour le moment à d'autres chercheurs ou à d'autres contextes les tentatives de 'pesée globale' et les prosopographies à partir de *corpus* clos. Procéder ainsi, comme le soulignait Albert Labarre dans le *Bulletin du bibliophile* (1998, n° 1, pp. 203-204) en rendant compte du dernier état de notre publication, c'est aussi refuser de s'appuyer seulement sur une 'compilation bibliographique' plus ou moins virtuelle, mais prendre pour source première 'les livres eux-mêmes, au cours d'une opération de catalogage qui ne fait que se développer'. C'est aussi 'l'occasion de rappeler, ajoutait-il, que l'histoire du livre ne doit pas [non plus] se contenter des sources d'archives, mais que les livres eux-mêmes sont... une source essentielle'.

En faisant nôtres ces principes dans l'élaboration du *Répertoire*, nous avons certes dû diverger quelque peu de l'optique historique – encore que nous ayons beaucoup sollicité les documents d'archives disponibles à la BnF, notamment les grandes enquêtes sur la librairie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Nous nous sommes centrés d'abord, il est vrai, sur les éléments d'identification que les livres eux-mêmes pouvaient nous fournir, grâce au souci précoce de traçabilité dont ils témoignent: formes du nom, variantes, lieux et dates d'activité, adresses et enseignes successives, devises... Puis nous avons nourri le corps de chaque notice en organisant la matière biographique collectée autour de critères objectifs tels que: liens de famille, carrière (éta-

pes et vicissitudes), associations, cessions et rachats de fonds, successions, etc. Le tout pouvant permettre à l'utilisateur de déboucher s'il le souhaite sur une approche typologique du *corpus* présenté, ou bien d'entamer à partir des sources citées une recherche monographique plus approfondie. Autrement dit, nous nous sommes résolument situés dans une perspective pratique, au service de l'utilisateur quel qu'il soit, en tâchant de ne pas non plus perdre de vue les exigences proprement bibliothéconomiques des fichiers d'autorité (établir des notices non équivoques permettant des liens et des tris informatiques fiables).

Le résultat concret et immédiat, c'est que, sur les Estienne, les Elzevier et autres célébrités, l'on n'apprendra bien sûr rien de plus que ce qui peut figurer dans les monographies de référence citées en '*Sources*' dans nos notices. En revanche, on trouvera sur une masse de professionnels du livre moins connus une foule de renseignements de première main tirés des exemplaires catalogués eux-mêmes ou repérés à l'aide du CD-Rom de conversion rétrospective, ou encore issus de sources inédites propres à la BnF (fichiers d'érudits comme le fichier Renouard, thèses non publiées, documents d'archives). Ainsi se trouveront mis au jour bien des libraires provinciaux des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, bien des typographes parisiens de la Révolution, sur lesquels les bibliographies de premier recours sont le plus souvent muettes.

Et si, à plus ou moins long terme, l'utilisateur se satisfait de ce qu'il trouve dans notre produit, ce sera peut-être le signe qu'en ne prétendant ni à la sélectivité ni à l'exhaustivité, le *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires* de la BnF sera pourtant parvenu à ne renoncer ni au défi qualitatif ni au défi quantitatif. Quant à celui de la représentativité, peut-être ne pourra-t-il le relever, comme le suggèrent non sans raison plusieurs collègues étrangers parmi lesquels María Luisa López-Vidriero, qu'en faisant reposer sa progression ultérieure sur une logique de partage culturel (avec des partenaires régionaux en France même, et nationaux à l'étranger). Ce qui, après tout, ne contreviendrait pas, bien au contraire, à l'inspiration européenne du projet.



À l'heure où une masse de plus en plus prodigieuse de données bibliographiques se trouve mise en circulation, grâce notamment à la conversion rétrospective de nos fichiers et catalogues anciens, il serait en tout cas inconcevable que nous – bibliothèques de recherche – ne tentions pas de fournir aux utilisateurs potentiels de ce nouveau foisonnement les clefs spécifiques de son exploitation. À défaut, nous nous rendrions responsables de l'avène-

ment d'une forme de chaos documentaire que Bernard Vouillot a surnommée non sans pittoresque la 'foire bibliographique' mondialisée. Profitons donc du fait que, en prise directe avec les collections – et parfois même, comme à la BnF, avec leur environnement archivistique –, nous disposons des ressources et compétences les plus indiquées pour forger ces outils appelés à devenir de plus en plus indispensables avec l'explosion de l'information bibliographique accessible. *Le Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires* n'a d'autre prétention que d'appartenir à cette nouvelle catégorie d'outils, que la pression accrue de la demande nous fait un devoir de mettre au point au plus près de la source d'information. Plus perfectionné que les index, moins complet d'emblée mais plus riche et perfectible que les *thesaurus* nationaux, il doit selon nous, pour rendre les meilleurs services, coller à la modestie de sa matière première – à savoir le catalogue et le repérage des collections existantes *in situ* –, sans pour autant renoncer à capitaliser autour de cette matière première la quantité et la qualité des sources et informations susceptibles d'assurer son crédit scientifique.

#### SUMMARY

The paper sets out the circumstances that led to the compilation of the *Répertoire* or finding list of printers and booksellers undertaken by the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in parallel with its main retrospective cataloguing projects. Due to growing awareness of how much precise information is contained in imprints, of great value to the history of printing and book-trade, the BnF undertook this project in the expectation of creating an instrument for scholars as well as enhancing the information held in library catalogues. Conventional cataloguing formats exclude much valuable information in this area. Files already existing in the BnF were unsystematic and contained errors, were overloaded with variant forms, and were generally unsatisfactory. Automation would support standardization, and improve accuracy and reliability.

Initially the project was limited to indexing the imprints in the catalogue of anonymous works, with particular care to ensure the correct identification of persons (printers, booksellers) as well as place names. By verification in appropriate reference works an authority file for internal use came to be created.

The basis for this file was gradually expanded through the *Opale* database and its network, a state of development reflected in 1988 in the preliminary publication of the *Répertoire*. Concentrations in the cataloguing of well-defined areas are clearly reflected in the *Répertoire*, e.g. pre-1810 book dealers'

catalogues, diocesan catechisms, English anonymous works of the 18th century. Incorporating such smaller projects, the *Répertoire* grew from 1,000 entries in 1988, 2,000 in 1991, 4,000 in 1997 to 5,200 at the end of 1999. Generally, its successive publications were well received, as witnessed by several reviews quoted by the author. The table demonstrates and compares the extent in which 21 countries are represented in the most recent state of the *Répertoire*, showing the relatively strong representation of France followed by Germany, Great Britain and Italy, while the figures for some other countries are still very low (e.g. Poland, Portugal, Austria, Denmark and Sweden). Over half of the entries are for eighteenth-century imprints.

It should be evident that at this stage of the project these figures have no connection at all to historical reality. In the first place they depend on particular cataloguing projects and even now it is very difficult to estimate how close the present state of the project is anywhere near completion. Even for an area as intensively explored as Parisian printing in the eighteenth century, some 3,000 entries are still waiting to be included. The National Archives – an independent source – holds records of some 40,000 French printers and booksellers of the nineteenth century. Even the number of women active in the booktrade in France between the introduction of printing and 1900 amounts to 10,000. These figures indicate that the present state of the *Répertoire* should be used with caution. More important with regard of what can be expected of the project is that in spite of the early introduction of copyright deposit in France, the collections of the BnF are far from comprehensive, even for book-production in France. For example, only 40% of books produced in Rouen between 1601 and 1700 are represented by a copy in the BnF. For countries other than France the BnF collections are of course even much less representative.

Instead of aiming to produce a comprehensive work of reference, the *Répertoire*'s editors enhance the data derived from cataloguing with further information, such as biographical details, family relations, lines of succession, etc. Especially for the less well-known members of the booktrade this strategy provides a large amount of new information. Specialists in the history of particular regions or countries may be called upon to provide further information. Access to automated retrospective bibliographical files is growing rapidly. It is inconceivable that we should neglect to provide the means for unlocking the information contained in these files for the benefit of users who should be made aware, however, of their limitations. In spite of these limitations users stand to benefit from a system with a scope going beyond a simple index or a national thesaurus.

# The Authority File for Names of Persons of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia in the Institute for Studies in Russian Literature: *A Utopian Project*

ANDREY C. MASSEVITCH



ALLA V. OSTROVSKAYA

‘Gentlemen! This is the head of a famous African bibliographer. As you can see inside it looks like a box with a lot of separations, walls and little departments, each of which is staffed with titles and descriptions of books, booklets, statutes, laws, instructions, pamphlets etc. of all known and unknown nations. All these things are placed in disorder in different little boxes. You will probably think there is no purpose in using such a head? Oh, you are making a mistake: there are occasions when it capable of real miracles . . . Now, I put my finger in its ear and as soon as I turn it in one direction – crack! – you see, all the headings are sorted in alphabetical order! And now I turn my finger in the opposite direction and – crack! – the same editions are now in chronological order, sorted by year of publication! I try another ear and -look- the headings are placed in classes according to the content of a book. An amazing head, isn’t it? But I do not want to deceive you, it is capable only of stupid tricks like these, you can not use it for really practical things.’

O. Senkovskii

## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Studies in Russian Literature (IRLI) was founded in St Petersburg at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was initially planned as a centre for studies of Pushkin’s literary heritage. Hence the semiofficial name of the institute is Pushkinskii Dom (House of Pushkin) – which is used very often. Gradually the scope of its interests has widened and at the moment IRLI deals with all periods of the literary history of Russia. From the time of its foundation, for over ninety years, IRLI has collected printed

and handwritten documents, and museum items connected with Russian cultural history. It now possesses large collections of great value.

#### THE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES OF IRLI

The work of IRLI researchers provides the most recent, up to date and thoroughly verified information on different aspects of Russian culture, provided by advanced specialists in the field. Every year the institute produces thousands of papers, monographs and reference editions of all kinds.

During the years of its existence the IRLI has accumulated a number of reference collections created for different purposes by prominent scholars and teams of researchers of the cultural history of Russia. They consist of handwritten cards, cuttings from printed materials, as well as files of handwritten or typed loose leaves, etc. The total number of such records is close to several million; they contain ample information on various aspects of Russian cultural history such as literature, science, arts and public life.

To take as examples:

- S. A. Vengerov's collection contains a documentation on cards of biographies of significant personalities in Russian cultural history. Vengerov started collecting biographical and bibliographical materials in the 1880s while compiling his *Critical and Biographical dictionary of Russian Writers and Scientists* and later a bibliographical edition *The Repertoire of Russian books of the 18th and 19th centuries*. Both books remained unfinished. But the collections nevertheless kept growing till the death of Vengerov (1920). In 1915 Vengerov reported that the total number of records in his collections was very close to 2,000,000. It covers a period from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.
- The V. I. Saitov and B. L. Modzalevski set of files on cards. It covers the period from the eighteenth century to 1880. The collections were created by several scholars. They contain biographical and genealogical information which was gathered from different sources over a period of 25 years.
- The A. D. Alekseev collection comprises bibliographic records of articles from Russian periodicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In many cases, these collections provide a unique source of information needed for the identification of a person, a title or an event. Obviously, this is very important for the authority control system. Therefore, the specialists use them quite actively, although the collections are certainly not very convenient for users. Besides, the physical condition of the materials is rather

poor and using them too much can have serious consequences for their preservation.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATABASE

Since 1993 the Department for Studies of Documentary Sources and Bibliography of the IRLI has been carrying out a project called 'Russkaya Slownost' (Russian Literature and Folklore). One of the objectives of the project is development of the electronic system consisting of several databases containing bibliographic and authority records.

At the end of 1998 the bibliographical database contained more than 30 000 bibliographical records on the history of Russian Literature mainly regarding the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1999, the Russian Foundation for the Humanities provided funding for the development of the authority control system.

#### A NON-BIBLIOGRAPHIC OBJECTIVE

About two years ago a new objective was set in the department. In the course of his research a specialist in cultural history often creates reference records on cards, on sheets of paper or in any other form. The collections of these records may grow extensively during the years of his/her activity (Examples of such collection were mentioned above). Thus, the new objective was to construct a tool which would allow the researcher to create the records needed for his work in an electronic form. The specialists of the department were looking for a way of representing non-bibliographic entities: names of persons, geographical places, historical events etc. The logical question was raised what kind of machine format should be used for such kinds of records.

In working on the authority control system we realised that an authority record can be used not only for the identification of objects and the maintenance of consistency in descriptions of documents. It also might be a base for the reference record we were trying to create.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE RECORD

The UNIMARC/Authorities format was chosen as a basis for the internal format of the database. It is quite understandable that a record in our database should contain more information than a usual authority record does. The structure of UNIMARC/Authorities does not make it possible to introduce all the data we need. The additional data are organised by introducing fields for local use with tags containing -9, -9- and 9. We structured

the fields in the same way as fields 200, 400, 500 in the UNIMARC/Authorities format, using the same pattern for tagging subfields. About 50 elements were introduced for the data which are not usually presented in a standard authority record but are important for research works of a different kind. These elements might contain the details of a person's literary activities, iconography, types of occupations at different periods of life, relations with contemporaries, genealogy, and other biographical details.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF NON-BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA

An attempt was made to create a relationships classification between various concepts such as person – person, person – place, person – time etc. To designate those relationships a system of codes was developed which can be used for linking records.

##### *Provisionary codes for relationships:*

##### 0 - *Inter-personal relationships*

##### 00 - family relationships

##### 001 - parents

##### 001.001 - grandparents

##### 001.003 - uncles, aunts

##### 002 - children

##### 002.002 - grandchildren

##### 003 - brothers, sisters

##### 003.002 - nephews, nieces

##### 004 - stepfathers, stepmothers

##### 007 - spouses

##### 007.001 - fathers in law, mothers in law

##### 007.002 - children of other spouses

##### 011 - *friends*

##### 017 - intimate relations (lovers, mistresses)

##### 03 - *relationships based on the same kind of activity*

##### 030 - teachers

##### 031 - pupils

##### 04 - *formal relationships*

##### 041 - above

##### 042 - below

##### 7 - *relationships between persons and places or/and corporate bodies*

##### 700 - places of birth

##### 700.00 - places of birth of closely related persons

##### 702 - places of baptism

##### 703 - places (or institutions) of learning

##### 705.007 - places of marriage



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707 – places of death

707.00 – places of death of a closely related persons [CHECK]

708 – burial places

709 – Relationships not specified (other relationships)

### EXAMPLE 1

The records on Pushkin's family members are a good illustration of how the classification system works. In this example all kinds of relationships can be shown. The family is very well known and all the relationships are well documented. We give the fragments of records on A. S. Pushkin himself, his wife and younger daughter. The data are given in transliteration, translation into English and some comments are given in brackets []. The intention is mainly to show how different kinds of family relationships are indicated.

\00100050

\200 1\$aPushkin\$bA.S.\$gAleksandr Sergeevich\$f1799-1837\$oOsnovnaia zapis'\$[authority record]\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus

[Parents:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bS.L.\$gSergei Lvovich\$f1770-1840\$9001

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gNadezhda Osipovna\$f1775-1836\$9001

[Uncle:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bV.L.\$gVasilii Lvovich\$f1766-1830\$9001.003

[Brother and sister:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bL.S.\$gLev Sergeevich\$f1805-1852\$9003

\900 1\$aPavlishcheva\$bO.S.\$gOl'ga Sergeevna\$f1797-1868\$9003

[Wife:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bN.N.\$gNatal'ia Nikolaevna\$f1812-1863\$300063\$9007

[Children:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gMariia Aleksandrovna\$f1832-1919\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bA.A.\$gAleksandr Aleksandrovich\$f1833-1914\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bG.A.\$gGrigorii Aleksandrovich\$f1835-1905\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bN.A.\$gNatal'ia Aleksandrovna\$f1836-1913\$9002

[Descendent:]

\900 1\$aFillips\$bF.M.\$gFiona Mersides\$f1991\$9002.002.002.002.002

\801 0\$arub\$birLI RAN\$c19991125

\00100063

\200 1\$aPushkina\$bN.N.\$gNatal'ia Nikolaevna\$f1812-1863\$oOsnovnaia zapis'\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus

[Name before marriage:]

\500 1\$aGoncharova\$bN.N.\$gNatal'ia Nikolaevna\$oSm. takzhe\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus

[Second marriage name:]

\500 1\$aLanskaia\$bN.N.\$gNatal'ia Nikolaevna\$oS\$m. takzhe\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus

[Husband:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bA.S.\$gAleksandr Sergeevich\$f1799-1837\$2LIT\$300050\$7ca\$8rus

\900 1\$aLanskoi\$bP.P.\$gPetr Petrovich\$xVtoroi brak[second marriage]\$9007

[Father in law:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bS.L.\$gSergei L'vovich\$f1770-1840\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus\$9007.001

[Mother in law:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gNadezhda Osipovna\$f1775-1836\$2LIT\$7-ca\$8rus\$9007.001

[Uncle of husband:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bV.L.\$gVasilii L'vovich\$f1766-1830\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus\$9007.001.003

[Brother in law:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bL.S.\$gLev Sergeevich\$f1805-1852\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus\$9007.003

[Children by first marriage:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gMariia Aleksandrovna\$f1832-1919\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bA.A.\$gAleksandr Aleksandrovich\$f1833-1914\$2LIT\$7-ca\$8rus\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bG.A.\$gGrigorii Aleksandrovich\$f1835-1905\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus\$9002

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bN.A.\$gNatal'ia Aleksandrovna\$f1836-1913\$2LIT\$300075\$7-ca\$8rus\$9002

[Descendent:]

\900 1\$aFillips\$bF.M.\$gFiona Mersides\$f1991\$9002.002.002.002.002

\801 0\$aru\$bIRLI RAN\$c19991125

\00100075

\200 1\$aPushkina\$bN.A.\$gNatal'ia Aleksandrovna\$f1836-1913\$2LIT\$7ca\$8rus

[First marriage name:]

\500 1\$aDubel't\$bN.A.\$gNatal'ia Aleksandrovna\$f1836-1913\$5z

[Second marriage name:]

\500 1\$aMerenberg\$bN.A.\$gNatal'ia Aleksandrovna\$f1836-1913\$cgrafinia

[countess]\$5z

[First husband:]

\900 1\$aDubel't\$bM.L.\$gMikhail Leont'evich\$f1822-1900\$xPervyi brak\$z1853\$9007

[Second husband – Nikolas Wilhelm von Naussen:]

\900 0\$aNikolai Vil'gel'm\$bNasauskii\$cprints[prince]\$f1832-1905\$xVtoroi brak\$z1867\$9007

[Father:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bA.S.\$gAleksandr Sergeevich\$f1799-1837\$300050\$9001

[Mother:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bN.N.\$gNatal'ia Nikolaevna\$f1812-1863\$300063\$9001

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[Grandfather:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bS.L.\$gSergei L'vovich\$f1770-1840\$9001.001

[Grandmother:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gNadezhda Osipovna\$f1775-1836\$9001.001

[Brother of grandfather:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bV.L.\$gVasilii L'vovich\$f1766-1830\$9001.001.003

[Uncle:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bL.S.\$gLev Sergeevich\$f1805-1852\$9001.003

[Aunt:]

\900 1\$aPavlishcheva\$bO.S.\$gOl'ga Sergeevna\$f1797-1868\$9001.003

[Sister:]

\900 1\$aPushkina\$bM.A.\$gMariia Aleksandrovna\$f1832-1919\$9003

[Brothers:]

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bA.A.\$gAleksandr Aleksandrovich\$f1833-1914\$9003

\900 1\$aPushkin\$bG.A.\$gGrigorii Aleksandrovich\$f1835-1905\$9003

[Stepfather:]

\900 1\$aLanskoi\$bP.P.\$gPetr Petrovich\$9004

[Daughter – countess Merenberg Sophy:]

\900 1\$aMerenberg\$bS.N.\$gSof'ia Nikolaevna\$cgrafinia[countess]\$f1868-1928\$9002

[Granddaughter – countess Zia de Torbi:]

\900 1\$aTorbi\$bZ. de\$gZia de\$cgrafinia[countess]\$f1919-\$9002.002

[Great granddaughter – Georgina Verner:]

\900 1\$aVerner\$bDzh.\$gDzhordzhina\$f1919-\$9002.002.002

[Descendent:]

\900 1\$aFillips\$bF. M.\$gFiona Mersides\$f1951-\$yAngliia[England]\$9002.002.002.002

\801 0\$aru\$bIRLI RAN\$c199911DD

This type of specification of relationships and linking records presents an obvious problem. Any person during his or her lifetime establishes a multitude of dynamic relationships, which are absolutely impossible to specify. The book by V. M. Rusakov *Stories of Pushkin's descendants*, published in Leningrad in 1982 gives a detailed list of 238 persons of seven generations of descendants of A. S. Pushkin. The number does not even cover the whole family. If we add names of other persons who were somehow related to Pushkin – the number will grow to thousands. Each of them had his or her own life with its own events, relationships, travels etc.

One should, therefore, distinguish between significant and non-significant relationships. But such differentiation will certainly depend upon a given situation and its interpretation – who and for what purpose is going

to establish the relationships. The system provides a tool for establishing relationships that is made available to researchers, enabling them to establish the specific relationships needed for their research.

Creation of records of this kind is the result of hard work of long duration, of processing large amounts of varied, sometimes contradictory data. The data are based on serious research work and have to be validated by specialists in the history of Russian literature.

The main goal thus was to create a set of records which can lead to results of different kinds as follows:

#### SET OF RECORDS

1. Interactive search of the database
2. Framework for the text of a biographical note
3. Hypertext systems
4. Authority records

##### 1. Interactive search

Our system should be able to answer many questions, for example 'What persons (reflected in the data) lived in the city of Riazan' in 1816? What significant works were published in 1805? Who was involved in the circle of a certain writer?'

We shall use here the well-known and somewhat rigid technology of inverted file search. The set of search terms, their combination and the user's interface should be thoroughly thought out.

##### 2. Framework for the text of a biographical note

The possible use of the system is illustrated below. The assumption is that we want to create a biographical reference for a publication – say an entry in a dictionary.

#### EXAMPLE 2

\ irliooooo5

\100 \$a19990810arusco102ca

\200 1\$aNadezhdin\$bN.I.\$gNikolai Ivanovich\$f5(17).10.1804-11.-

(23).01.1856\$oAuthority record\$2IRLI\$5f\$7ca\$8rus

\400 o\$aNikodim\$bNadoumko\$oSm.\$2IRLI\$3irliooooo6\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

\400 o\$aP.Shch.<sup>1</sup>\$oSm.\$5e\$7ca\$8rus\*

\900 1\$aBeloomutskii(?)\$bIvan\$c svyashch.<sup>2c</sup> \$xBeloomutskaia Preobrazhenskaia tserkov'\$9001

\915 \$aNizhnii Beloomut\$yZaraickii uezd\$yRiazanskaia gub.\$z1804-1815\$9700

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- \915 \$aRiazan'\$z1815-1820\$9703
- \910 \$aRiazanskoe uездnoe dukhovnoe uchilishche<sup>3</sup> \$z1815-1816\$9703
- \910 \$aRiazanskaia dukhovnaia seminaria<sup>4</sup> \$z1816-1820\$9703
- \910 \$aSmolenskoe kladbishche\$ySankt-Peterburg<sup>5</sup> \$9708.....
- \700 1\$aNadezhdin\$bN.I.\$7ba\$8eng
- \801 o\$arus\$bIRLI RAN\$c1990810
- \810 \$aRusskie pisateli 1800-1817: t.4.-M.,1999
- \810 \$aBerlin, I. Russian Thinkers. – Dallas, 1979\$bImennoi – ukazatel'
- \830 \$aLiterary critic, philosopher, journalist; ethnographer.

Nadezhdin Nikolai Ivanovich [pseud. Nikodim Nadoumko etc.; 5.(17).10.1804, s.Nizhnii Beloomut, Zairaskogo u., Riazanskoi gub.-11(23).01.1856, *St Petersburg; buried in the Smolensk cemetery.*], *Literary critic, philosopher, journalist; ethnographer.* From a family of clerics: his grandfather and his father were priests Beloomut church of Transfiguration. His father, [who passed to his son 'passion for reading', and] *S. D. Nechaev* [later an *official of the Sinod*] – [were his first teachers. On the advice of his father he went to] Riazan' (1815) ... [where he was accepted as a student] in Riazan' theological school, [and after a year] in 1816 [he was accepted to] *Riazan' Theological Seminary*.

This example is a part of the record describing Nadezhdin, Russian literary critic, to show how a biographical reference which is in fact the framework of a biographical note which could be used for creation of historical comment, can be generated.

The elements taken from the authority record are distinguished by the style of script. Users can add any formulation to the framework (examples of additional formulation are in square brackets). At the moment the IRLI carries out several projects covering with compilation of biographies, introductions and comments for publication of various writers.

There is also a possibility for electronic publication: a text with a marked-up language may also be generated from the system.

The problem is showing that a classification system is not very good artificial language. There is no absolutely comprehensive classification scheme. There are always items for which is not possible to find a suitable class. On the other hand, there may be items that can be fitted into more than one class. This paradox is inherent in communication through informational language. The paradigmatic relations in the natural language are dynamic, they are constantly modified in communication. In the use of informational language, a paradox is evident between the deliberately limited artificial means of expression, which lack flexibility, and the need for this flexibility in the course of any human communication. In addition it is not

very user-friendly. A user has to have quite a sophisticated scheme at his disposal to code the information – work he is not accustomed to, and this can complicate his progress.

But when we (as professional librarians) use the system ourselves on the small set of records, it works. Besides, the process of classifying is like a game. Once started it is very difficult to stop. Still, we are trying at the moment to develop another system for generating a text from a record.

### 3. Hypertext systems

We already have a certain amount of experience in loading data from the systems with HTML tags. Our plan is to prepare in the near future an electronic publication on one or two of the persons already included in the database in the form of hypertext.

### 4. Authority records

There are different cases of authority control. Some of them are already very well-known to the practical cataloguers. To the very well-known problems of authority control belong those related to transliteration of the Cyrillic letter ‘У’. In the seminar on authority control in 1995 held in St Petersburg, Ross Bourne even made a joke on the subject: ‘What would we have done in our seminar if there were no Chekhov or Chaikovski?’:

#### EXAMPLE 3

We would like to give an example of authority control of a different kind. Here is a case of a not very simple but more or less common situation when for authority control one might need the informational resources of the IRLI. Below will be found a part of the authority record on a Russian writer of Polish origin, Osip Senkovskii. He was an extraordinary person – a specialist in oriental culture, fluent in many Asiatic languages and author of elegant ironic fiction. He also was the publisher of a most popular magazine which in its time had the largest circulation and he wrote materials for his magazine under many different pseudonyms.

```
\200 1$aSenkovskii$bO.I.$xeditor$writer$gOsip Ivanovich$5f$7ca$8rus
\500 1$aSenkovskii$bI.Iu.$gIosif Iulian$5z$7ca$8rus
\500 o$aBaron Brambeus$5e$7ca$8rus
\500 1$aBelkin A.$5e$7ca$8rus
\500 o$aTiutiundzhi-oglu$5e$6$7ca$8rus
\500 o$aOsip$bMorozov$5e$7ca$8rus
\500 1$aZhenikhsberg$5e$7ca$8rus
```

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\500 0\$aKarlo\$bKarlini\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

\500 1\$aBaibakov\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

\700 1\$aSekowski\$bJozef Julian\$5f\$7ba\$8pol

The pseudonym 'Baron Brambeus' was the best known and in fact known to everybody. Even in Gogol's *The government inspector* the main character of the play, an inspired liar Khlestakov brags: 'I am the one who wrote everything you know under the name of Baron Brambeus'

In fact a book published in 1840 entitled *The fantastic stories of Baron Brameus* (shown in the table below) omits the second 'b'. The author Vasilii Tchernikov (he wrote mostly under the pseudonym of V. Nevskii) set up a hoax to lead people to confuse him with the well-known Baron Brambeus. This case is a subject for work in authority control but it is hardly of great importance for everyday bibliographic practice. Even the real Brambeus is at the moment more a personality in cultural history than an author favoured for leisure reading. But this is on the one hand an interesting fact in history; on the other hand it shows that authority records can be used for what we call a fine-tuning of bibliographical search.

### *Reference record (fragment)*

200 1\$aChernikov\$bV.V.\$gVasilii Vasil'evich\$0See\$2IRLI RAN\$5f\$7ca\$8rus

400 1\$aNevskii\$bV.\$0authority record\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

400 0\$aBaron Brameus\$0Sm.\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

810 \$aMasanov I.F. Slovar' psevdonimov M.,1956

### *Reference record (fragment)*

200 0\$aBaron Brameus\$0See\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

305 \$aDo not confuse with 'Baron Brambeus' pseudonym of O.I.Senkovskii

400 1\$aNevskii\$bV.\$0Osnovnaia zapis'\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

400 1\$aChernikov \$bV.V. \$gVasilii Vasil'evich\$0See\$2IRLI RAN\$5f\$7ca\$8rus

810 \$aMasanov I.F. Slovar' psevdonimov M.,1956

810 \$aFantasticheskie povesti i rasskazy barona Brameusa SPb.,1840

### *Authority record(fragment)*

200 1\$aNevskii\$bV.\$0authority record\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

400 1\$aChernikov\$bV.V.\$gVasilii Vasil'evich\$0Sm.\$2IRLI RAN\$5f\$7ca\$8rus

400 0\$aBaron Brameus\$0Sm.\$2IRLI\$5e\$7ca\$8rus

810 \$aMasanov I.F. Slovar' psevdonimov M.,1956

## CONCLUSIONS

The IRLI possesses valuable often unique information. It could (and we think, should) be used not only for the scholarly purposes, it might be

extremely helpful in bibliographical work (in particular as a source of information for authority records).

Our main goal is to create a multifunctional system that would generate results used for various purposes. What we present here is not one single methodology but simply one of several possible ways of utilising the material. Thus the combination of scholarly work on the history of culture and bibliographical work (the idea of the combination is not at all new) comes to a new level.

We also think, we can provide researchers in cultural history with a new tool which can possibly replace the traditional collections of file cards. Already, many scholars in various fields (in Russia less than in the western countries) use computers. To encourage them to produce their information in the unified structure ready for exchange may appear in fact to be a bit of a utopian dream. Nonetheless, we hope the idea will become at least partly feasible and put into practice.

The creation of the National Authority File in Russia is currently widely discussed. We are planning to suggest that our records be put to national and international use. The creation of a national authority file can be compared to the compilation of a national encyclopedia. It needs a well-organised team of highly-qualified professionals, and they will have an immense amount of work to do.

<sup>1</sup> Russian acronym II.III.

<sup>2</sup> Abbreviation of the Russian word 'sviaschennick' – a priest.

<sup>3</sup> Riazan' clergy school

<sup>4</sup> Riazan' theological seminary

<sup>5</sup> Smolenskoe cemetery in St Petersburg.



## List of Contributors

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