

IFLA Section on Rare Books and Manuscripts

Newsletter

Summer 2002

People

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Glasgow 2002

Starting August 18, 2002, the 68th IFLA General Conference will take place in Glasgow. IFLA returns to the roots by staging the Conference in Scotland: 75 years ago it all started in Edinburgh. As usual, you can find the exact programme on IFLA's website, but we will give you some details of interest for RBM here as it might be easier to find notes bundled together than to go through the huge amount of announcements in the official programme.

The motto this year is *Libraries for Life: Democracy, Diversity, Delivery* and the conference will last till August 24th, 2002.

RBM Section's Standing Committee will meet on Saturday 17th, 2002 early afternoon and on Friday, 24th, 2002 in the morning.

There is an Open Session (on Wednesday, August 21st, 2002) and a workshop (Thursday, August 22nd, 2002). From *Alice Prochaska* we got some more information:

The Open Session of the Rare Books and Manuscripts section will address the theme of co-operation between Libraries, Museums and Archives. The three speakers are: *Dr Wolfgang Undorf*, Head Unit for Book History, Planning of Stacks and Library Binding, Royal Library of Sweden: "Means before Purpose - the Development of cooperation between cultural heritage institutions in Sweden" *Dr Murray Simpson*, Director of Special Collections, the National Library of Scotland:

"The medium and the message: some thoughts on a National Library's digital library, current and future."

Dr Susan Allen, Chief Librarian, Research Library, the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles [title to be announced later]

There will also be a workshop , for a maximum of thirty people, on Thursday 22 August, 10:30 - 3:30, to be held at Pollok House, (National Trust for Scotland). Theme: some examples of local collaboration between museums, libraries and archives in the digital arena: exchanges of experience. Transport will be arranged. Speakers addressing particular local examples will include: *Professor Michael Moss*, Director, Humanities and Arts Technology and Information Institute (HATII), Glasgow ; *Mag. Norbert Schnetzer* (Vorarlberger Landesbibliothek Direktor-Stellvertreter Abt. für Sondersammlungen/Buchpflege) ; *Kate Parson*, Royal Library, Stockholm. The workshop meeting will take place in the library of Pollok House, which is a fascinating house of fifteenth-century origins, reconstructed in the late nineteenth century, and now open to the public. The Curator, *Robert Ferguson*, will offer a tour of the house after the meeting. All those members of the section who would like to join this workshop are invited to

contact *Wolfgang Undorf* to reserve a place.

There is no need to introduce the speakers, as you will know most of them from former meetings of the section but just in case:

Professor Moss has just co-edited (with J. Forbes Munro and Richard H. Trainor) a book on " University, city and state : the University of Glasgow since 1870 " (Edinburgh : Edinburgh Univ. Press for the Univ. of Glasgow, 2000. - XVIII, 382 p. : Ill., Kt.)

Mag. Norbert Schnetzer from Bregenz will be at the Conference in Graz *Kulturgut digital* to discuss questions of digitisation (look for details on that conference below) and Kate Parson is currently doing a project on „Image Databases and Digitisation - platform for ALM collaboration“ in Stockholm.

There might be some other talks of interest for members of the Section. Apart from the opening speech by a famous (Nobel Prize winner) poet this year - Seamus Heaney - on Monday, entitled *Stiles and Stacks, Old and New*, there are two meetings of the Section on Preservation and Conservation on Monday afternoon and Tuesday.

Monday 14.45-17.15:

A Blue Shield for the Protection of our Endangered Cultural Heritage. How to protect our

cultural heritage from armed conflicts and natural disasters.

"The Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of an armed conflict" by

Patrick Boylan (Leicester, UK)

"The international committee of the blue shield and its counterparts" by George Mckenzie (Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, UK)

"Disaster plans: importance, development and implementation" by Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France)

"Recovering from a disaster: Florence, 1966-2002" by Antonia Ida Fontana (National Library, Florence, Italy)

"Trust and terror" by Joan Challinor (NCLIS, USA)

Tuesday 11.00-13.30:

National Preservation Initiatives

“U.K. national preservation initiatives” by Helen Shenton (The British Library, London, UK)

“Racing against time: national preservation infrastructure in late 20th century America” by Mark Roosa (Library of Congress, Washington D.C., USA)

“Metamorfoze: the Dutch solution” by Dennis Schouten (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Netherlands)

“An overview of national preservation planning in Southern Europe” by Maria Luisa Cabral (Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon, Portugal)

On Thursday morning there will be a workshop of the Classification and Indexing with Cataloguing and with the CILIP Cataloguing and Indexing Group:

Interoperability: exchange of information between libraries, museums and archives.

One of the talks there will be: “Common Internet Portal for Libraries, Archives and Museums: BAM-Portal Gemeinsames Internetportal für Bibliotheken, Archive und Museen: BAM-Portal” by Gerald Maier (Landesarchivdirektion Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, Germany). You can read the text on the IFLA website.

For everything else that Glasgow can show you in the days of the Conference, please, do have a look at the website, especially at the IFLA Express and other publications.

Exhibitions

Here is some information on exhibitions passed (but with catalogues still available) and some suggestions for exhibitions in Autumn/Winter:

London:

“Trading Places - the East India Company & Asia 1600 - 1834” is the title of an exhibition currently shown in The British Library galleries, 96 Euston Road, London NW1. It started on 24 May and will be shown in August as it ends 22 September 2002. The exhibition contains many manuscripts, maps and photographs, telling the story of the rise and fall of the Company from its beginnings in London and its first trading post on Asian soil to its expansion into India, China, Indonesia, Japan and Persia until the loss of its trading monopoly in 1834.

There is a lavishly illustrated catalogue by Anthony Farrington (Details: 128 pp, 246 x 189mm, 75 col and 10 b/w ills; paperback, ISBN 0 7123 4756 9. Distributed in North America by University of Toronto Press, all other rights held by The British Library, Price: £15.00 until 22 September 2002, then £17.95). The exhibition and the book draw on the collections of The British Library, the holder of the documentary legacy of the East India Company. Just in case you cannot wait till you come to London, you can have a look at the exhibition on <http://www.bl.uk>

Edinburgh:

In time for the IFLA Conference is the exhibition of the National Library of Scotland. “This Book Belongs to Me - From Tom Thumb to Harry Potter” started 1 June and will go through 31 October 2002.

Cambridge:

“Beauty and the Book: Gems of colour printing ” is the title of an exhibition from 9 April through 14 September 2002 at Cambridge University Library Exhibition Centre, West Road, Cambridge. The exhibition explores the history of colour print in the

book and is drawn from the Library's collections. Highlights include an initial from the 1457 Psalter printed in Mainz by Fust & Schoeffer; England's earliest colour printed book, The Book of Hawking, Hunting and Heraldry produced in 1486; items from the Routledge Toy Book series illustrated by Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway and Randolph Caldecott and printed by Edmund Evans; George Baxter prints and lithographic designs by Owen Jones. Details on <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/>

Washington, DC:

Folger Shakespeare Library has three exhibitions this summer/autumn. "A Shared Passion: Henry Clay Folger, Jr., and Emily Jordan Folger as Collectors" started June 26 and goes through October 26, 2002. "Thys Boke Is Myne" will begin November 13, 2002 and go through March 1, 2003. It will explore how bibliophiles, famous and forgotten, have signalled ownership of treasured volumes for five hundred years and is drawn from the association copies in the Folger collection.

Next year, starting March 19, 2003 and going through late July, 2003, 400 years after her death, Queen Elizabeth I will be celebrated with "Elizabeth I, Then and Now" drawn exclusively from the Folger's holdings.

"An Odyssey in Print: Adventures in the Smithsonian Libraries", after a debut in the Grolier Club, is now at Smithsonian Libraries Gallery, 1st Floor, West Wing, National Museum of American History, Behring Center. From May 16 to December 2003.

"Wonder Bound - Rare Books on early museums" will be on display in the Constitution Avenue lobby of the National Museum of Natural History from May 24 to the end of October, 2002. View the interesting internet version under <http://www.sil.si.edu/exhibitions/wonderbound>. It is really delighting - provided you like crocodiles among your collections!

Los Angeles:

Huntington Library will show "William Morris: Creating the useful and the beautiful" till September 22, 2002. The exhibition is based on The Huntington's recently acquired collection of Morris material. As they say on <http://www.huntington.org> "The Huntington has the finest collection in the United States of the works of William Morris. The collection got its start in the early 20th century with Henry Huntington's interest in books and manuscripts related to Morris and his Kelmscott Press. Subsequent acquisitions included letters, drawings, scrapbooks, and other works. Then, in 1999, The Huntington purchased the Sanford and Helen Berger Collection, the most extensive private collection of Morris materials in the U.S."

Paris:

At Bibliothèque Nationale, there is "Monique Mathieu, reliures" on show from 18 June to 1 September 2002. Ms Mathieu is considered one of the most important living French bookbinders. 120 of her works will be in the exhibition.

Two other interesting exhibits will be finished by August, but they are on the website of the National Library, so it makes sense to mention them here.

To celebrate the bicentennial birthday of the great writer, the library staged an exhibition called "Victor Hugo, l'homme océan" from 21 March till 23 June, 2002. Approximately 300 items - books, letters, manuscripts - from the holdings of the

library have been shown. Hugo gave all his manuscripts to Bibliothèque Nationale. Another important exhibition was "Gustave Le Gray, photographe (1820-1884)" from 19 March till 16 June, 2002. About 250 photographs from collections in France, Europe and the United States were exhibited for the first time, some of them never shown before. The J.P. Getty Museum of Art, will show about 100 again in the Le Gray exhibition from 9 July to 29 September 2002. Apart from its photographic Collections, the National Library has a rapidly accumulating data base on books photographically illustrated - as has the British Library. This kind of illustration which was quite common in the 19th century, is often neglected by libraries, though photographs in books can sometimes be counted as incunabula of photography.

Berlin:

"Illuminierte Stunden - Buchdruck, Graphik, Buchmalerei und Einbandkunst in Frankreich 1490-1550" started at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz on 27 June and will go through August 3, 2002. It is in cooperation with bibliophile Heribert Tenschert, the owner of Antiquariat Bibernmühle, and will show books of hours from his collection as well as some incunabula and early printed books from Staatsbibliothek.

From 4 July to 17 August, 2002 there is another exhibition "Kitwe-Jad. Jüdische Handschriften - restaurieren, bewahren, präsentieren". The library owns one of the largest collections of oriental manuscripts in Europe. The Oriental Department is responsible for more than 40 000 volumes in almost all languages spoken in Asia and Africa. About 550 volumes are Jewish Manuscripts, most of them written in Hebrew. 66 manuscripts will be shown in the exhibition, most important will be the Hebrew Bible 'Erfurt 1'. The manuscript - two volumes written on velum, each of them about 50 kg of weight and with 47 x 63 cm the largest known Hebrew manuscript - was finished by 1343. The first owner mentioned in the codex is the Evangelisches Ministerium at Erfurt in 1706: They passed the Bible to Königliche Bibliothek in 1880.

Because of its weight the manuscript stayed in Berlin during World War II in the cellar of the Ministry of Economics but caught severe damage by fire and water when a bomb was thrown at the building. The Bible could not be opened any more till in 1999 Staatsbibliothek decided to restore it. The exhibition will show the results and demonstrate the steps taken up to now. There is a two volume catalogue of the exhibition.

In September it will be one hundred years that a Prussian expedition was sent to the Silk Road. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, and Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften will celebrate this with an exhibition and a colloquium "Turfan Revisited – The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road" on 8 September through 15 September, 2002. Details on <http://www.sbb.spk-berlin.de>

Munich:

Bettina Wagner has sent us the following text on an exhibition that has taken place in May and June in Munich and Neuburg a.d. D. "Exhibition of the Bible of Elector Ottheinrich":

The Bible which belonged to Elector Ottheinrich is the first illustrated manuscript of the New Testament in German and was written around 1430, almost 100 years before the seminal Bible translation by Martin Luther. The manuscript takes its name after Ottheinrich, Count Palatine of Pfalz-Neuburg, later Elector in Heidelberg, who in the sixteenth century commissioned additional splendid illustrations for the still incomplete manuscript. On the occasion of the production of a facsimile of the first part of the Bible, which is today preserved in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, original leaves from the manuscripts have been on display at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and the Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg a.d.D.

Count Palatine Ottheinrich (1502-1559), Regent of the principality of Pfalz-Neuburg, later

Elector in Heidelberg, was one of the most prominent German collectors of books.

His name

is linked to the richly illustrated, unusually large manuscript of a New Testament in German

translation. The first part of the so-called Ottheinrich-Bibel has just been published in a

facsimile edition by the Faksimile Verlag Luzern. On this occasion, several original leaves

from the manuscripts were on display at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and the Staatliche

Bibliothek Neuburg a.d.D. The Ottheinrich-Bible is the first illustrated manuscript of the New Testament in German. It was written around 1430 in Bavaria, almost 100 years before the Bible translation by Martin Luther, and was richly decorated with initials and miniatures in Regensburg. The sumptuous paintings in gold and lavish colours which imitate expensive cloth, pearl embroidery and precious stones, mark the Bible as a luxury object for the court. They are, however, only present on the first two gospels; initially, the decoration of the manuscript remained incomplete. Only recently, a member of the Bavarian Wittelsbach family could be identified as the commissioner of the book.

One hundred years after its production, Ottheinrich employed the painter Mathis Gerung from Lauingen to complete the Bible, which he had inherited on the creation of his principality. The young artist, who was to work for Ottheinrich on several other projects, decorated the Bible in the years 1530 and 1532 with colourful illustrations which are partly based on motives from woodcuts by Dürer and Cranach. In Munich and Neuburg a.d.D., a total of eleven illustrated pages from the original manuscript were on display, emphasizing the striking contrast between the gothic miniatures from the early 15th century and those from the age of the Renaissance. Both exhibitions were supplemented by additional books from Ottheinrich's collection, which he had bound in Renaissance style in gold-stamped bindings decorated with the portrait and coat of arms of the princely owner.

A richly illustrated catalogue for the exhibition was published for the price of 10,50 EUR. It can be obtained from Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Zentralabteilung, D-80328 München

or ordered by Fax: 089/28638-2978, Mail: zotz@bsb-muenchen.de or online under http://www.bsb-muenchen.de/english/ott_e.htm

Conferences:

Book Art: *The William Morris Society* announced an update to their website recently.

There will be sessions at the Modern Language Association conference: 27-30 December 2002, New York City, a conference "Sources and Inspiration: Boston as a Beacon for the American Arts and Crafts Movement" in Boston, MA, 19-32 June 2002, a symposium on Women, Gender, Class and Victorian Cultural Philanthropy c. 1860-1914 "Art for Life's Sake: Missionary or Practical Aesthetics" on 16-17 November 2002 at the Southampton Institute, and the Kelmscott Lecture on "William Morris, Hammersmith, and Utopia" by Ruth Levitas on 1 November 2002. Details from <http://www.morrissociety.org>

UCLA/Getty Museums, Libraries and Archives announced a "Summer Institute for Knowledge Sharing" on July 29-August 1, 2002 in Los Angeles for professionals involved in creating, sharing, and preserving electronic information in museums, libraries, archives, and other cultural heritage institutions. For more information go to: <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/si>

Bodleian Library celebrates its birthday this year. So there is an international conference in September "In celebration of libraries to mark the 400th Anniversary of the refounding of the university library by Sir Thomas Bodley" at Oxford (18 - 20 September 2002). There will be visits and talks. Speakers include David Vaisey CBE, Bodley's Librarian Emeritus on "The legacy of Sir Thomas Bodley" and Bernhard Fabian, Professor Emeritus, University of Münster and just appointed honorary Ph.D. in Book Science at Berlin Humboldt University on "Humanistic scholarship and the European printed archive". Michael Gorman, Dean of Library Services, California State University, Fresno will speak on "Libraries: their value and values" and Michael Keller, University Librarian and Director of Academic Information Resources at Stanford University on "The future of great research libraries". Details from Bodleian's website.

Digital Resources for the Humanities 2002 conference (DRH2002) will be held at the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Library, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD - Scotland - UK from 8th - 11th September 2002. You will have to register before 16th August. DRH2002 will concentrate on provision and management of access, digital libraries, archives and museums, information analysis, design and modelling in humanities research, knowledge representation, including visualization and simulation and related subjects.

"The future history of the book" is the title of an international conference held on 7-8 November 2002 in *The Hague (Netherlands)* at *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*. The theme of this international conference will be: the influence of new media on book historical research and new directions in book history. Bibliopolis will be presented during this conference. Details from the library's website.

"Preservation and Conservation Issues Related to Digital Printing and Digital Photography" is the theme of a two-day conference for conservators of print and textiles on 3 - 4 April 2003 held at the *Institute of Physics Conference Centre* in Portland Place, London. Details from The Conference Centre, The Institute of Physics, 76 Portland Place, London, W1B 1NT, England

On July 1 and 2, 2002 there is a workshop "Kulturgut digital" held at *Graz University Library*. Speakers will include Dr. Hans Zotter, Graz, Dr. Maria Effinger, Heidelberg, Dr. Andreas Fingernagel, Vienna, and Dr. Bettina Wagner, Munich. Themes will be

'state of the art' in digitising as well as the discussion of practical questions related to digitising.

Preservation, Digitisation:

EROMM European Register of Microform Masters

The European Register of Microform Masters, based at the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen, Germany, is the host database for some 400,000 European records of microform masters and also includes records of digital preservation surrogates. All the microform records from the North American RLIN database of the Research Libraries Group are accessible, taking the total number of records on the EROMM database to some 2.3 million. The LAROMM (Latin American Register of Microform Masters) records widen the scope of the database so that Latin America is also represented. The records cover material from 1453 onwards, largely that of printed books. EROMM started as a pilot project in 1989. Currently there are 14 partners across Europe.

Partners collect records of their own and records from libraries affiliated to them or participants in national or local microfilming programmes filming items to agreed archival standards. Partners then send the resulting records on to the EROMM host after converting them to UNIMARC format.

Several new policies were promulgated for discussion by the Steering Committee meeting at the National Library in Prague on the 3rd and 4th May 2001. The changes now agreed give libraries with an interest in discovering which items have been filmed in European microfilming

programmes institutional access to the database free of charge. This must be done through registration in the first instance. EROMM libraries i.e. those which also contribute records to the EROMM database via their partner library, will enjoy special conditions for ordering and delivery, details of these and the registration procedures are available on the EROMM website www.eromm.org/join-e.htm. The requesting facility for obtaining microform copies can be used by the staff in participating libraries; this will cost 77 Euro each year. A CD-ROM of all the European records is also available and is usually updated annually. Purchasing the CD-ROM also gives the buyer the option to network the information to multiple workstations if required. All these measures are designed to help participating libraries easily obtain copies of microfilm which they need instead of using precious resources filming other copies. The 2001 meeting also decided to publicise the required standards for surrogates when adding these records in the EROMM database and these have now been mounted on the website. All microfilm records produced for the database require an archival negative copy and digital material must be that which is being produced for preservation reasons. Anyone in European research libraries or archives interested in contributing records of their archival filming programmes to EROMM are welcome to contact their national EROMM partner library (for a list see www.eromm.org/erompa.htm).

For further information about EROMM visit the EROMM website www.eromm.org.

Lyn Stagg, Manager, Register of Preservation Microforms, The British Library
(First published in the 'NPO Journal' Issue 9, October 2001 and now reprinted with

minor changes by permission of the author.)

Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

By the end of May a new website was launched by DPC , a consortium of 19 major UK organisations which aims to ensure that digital archiving is kept on the policy agenda. On

[http:// www.dpconline.org](http://www.dpconline.org) you can find information on its work and the online edition of *Preservation Management of Digital Materials-A Handbook*. The site also includes a web version of the first issue of 'Whats New in Digital Preservation' a collaboration between the DPC and PADI.

Organisations on the board of the DPC include the British Library, Consortium of University Research Libraries, Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher and Further Education Funding Councils (JISC), National Archives of Scotland, OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre), Public Record Office, Public Record Office for Northern Ireland, Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, and the University of London Computer Centre. There are associate members, too, including Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, Central Information Technology Unit for Northern Ireland, Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils, National Electronic Library for Health, National Library of Scotland , National Library of Wales , Publishers Association, Research Libraries Group, Trinity College Library Dublin, Wellcome Trust Library.

Goals of the DPC are:

- producing, providing and disseminating information on current research and practice and building expertise amongst its members to accelerate their learning
- instituting a concerted effort to get digital preservation on the agenda of key stakeholders
- acting in concert to make arguments for adequate funding to secure the nation's investment in digital resources and ensure an enduring global digital memory
- providing a common forum for the development and co-ordination of digital preservation strategies in the UK
- promoting and developing services, technology and standards
- forging strategic alliances with agencies nationally and internationally
- attracting funding to the Coalition

The Handbook has originally been published by The British Library in 2001.

(Taken from a press release by Neil Beagrie, JISC Digital Preservation Focus Programme Director, Secretary, Digital Preservation Coalition JISC London Office, King's College London, Strand Bridge House, 138 - 142, The Strand, London WC2R 1HH, UK, provided by Resourcenews)

Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano, has just (June 18, 2002) launched a new website with a presentation of the Codex Atlanticus by Leonardo da Vinci. Details from www.ambrosiana.it

Provenance:

Some short notes on a theme not much heard about in the section's Newsletter for a long time are coming from Weimar and Berlin.

In *Bibliotheksdiens*t 2002 No 6 there is an article by Jürgen Weber on "The copy in

hand" – Voraussetzungen und Ziele exemplarspezifischer Erschließung". In it, Dr. Weber analyses the discussion on handling copy-specific notes in AACR-2 and RAK (Regeln für die alphabetische Katalogisierung), and cataloguing the information provided in MARC and PICA. From own experience with cataloguing provenances in the so-called Weimarer Modell he pleads for more efficient forms of giving details on the copy in hand in modern catalogues. Dr. Weber, who is head of Special Collections at Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, promised to send an article for a later number of this newsletter giving more details on 'Weimar Modell.'

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz announced a database documenting the losses and provenance of works of art in Gemaeldegalerie and Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin.

The database - <http://www.smpk.de/home/lostart.html> - can be searched for holdings in these two museums but it will be augmented continuously.

Skulpturengalerie and Kunstgewerbemuseum will follow soon. The material can be found on <http://www.lostart.de/>, the database provided by Koordinierungsstelle fuer Kulturgutverluste (beim Kultusministerium des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt in Magdeburg), too.

Under www.bm-lyon.fr there is a provenance index to books in the *Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon*. Former owners and their marks of ownership are illustrated when you go to "Bases de données" on the website. Information on the owner is linked to the bibliographical details in the catalogue of Lyon Library.

Loan Policies

ACRL has recently discussed loan policies and renewed their guidelines. The full text can be found under www.rbms.nd.edu in the Appendices to the minutes of their conference under "Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Materials for Exhibition". You will find the guidelines if you search for „minutes midwinter“ and then go to RBMS Executive Committee. The guidelines which are not yet approved are very similar to what we have published in earlier issues of this newsletter. They are thought to be useful to as many different libraries as possible.

From the Journals:

Rare Books Newsletter 66 (Summer-Winter 2001) announces the Rare Books Group annual study conference which is to take place at Edinburgh in September and will deal with children's books. Summaries of papers of last years conference form part of this issue as does an interesting report on Montefiascone, a conservation project in Italy. The series of articles on RSLP-funded projects is continued by Dr. Détraz, Christine Gascoigne and Sue Donnelly on pamphlets and the Charles Booth Online Archive.

Sharp News 11,2 (Spring 2002) publishes - apart from reviews and calls for papers - articles on book history research in Finland, CERL, and a report on a conference held at Calcutta on book history in India.

In *RBM* 3(2002)1 is an article by Jerome McGann on problems caused by the digital

revolution „The Gutenberg Variations“.

Databases

From Robert Giel of Handschriftenabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, we have got the following article which explains the manuscript database announced in the Winter Newsletter in more detail:

"Manuscripta mediaevalia".

An Internet tool for research in medieval manuscripts

With over half a million index entries, the database of the “Gesamtindex mittelalterlicher Handschriftenkataloge” has played a prominent role in German manuscript research during the last decade. However, since autumn 1999 no further data has been entered, and – along with the closing of the “Deutsche Bibliotheksinstitut” – the end of this undertaking as an internationally accessible information tool is at hand. In the meantime the “Gesamtindex” has long been completely absorbed in another much more extensive venture, namely “Manuscripta mediaevalia”.

Since 1996, the “Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft” (DFG) – already having funded work on the “Gesamtindex” – has financially supported the project “Manuscripta mediaevalia”, in which the “Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage”, the “Bildarchiv Foto Marburg” and the “Bavarian State Library Munich” joined forces as project partners. Their efforts resulted in an Internet service, which provides free and specific access to the results of manuscript research in Germany to scholars worldwide. This is accomplished on three levels of information corresponding to three scenarios of interest.

Scenario 1: A user is in search of manuscripts which contain *specific information*.

Search facilities for structured information retrieval are provided by the database of “Manuscripta mediaevalia”. In the first place it comprises the complete data set from the “Gesamtindex”, i.e. about 500.000 index entries concerning more than 25.000 manuscripts of mostly medieval provenance. In the main, this data was converted from over 170 printed manuscript catalogues published since around 1960 and which basically represent German post-war manuscript research. Additionally, data drawn from different sources is continuously added. First and foremost, this concerns the indices of another 22 catalogues published since 1999. However, a number of older manuscript catalogues and inventories containing scientific manuscript descriptions are also integrated into the database. So far, older catalogues from Bamberg, Erlangen, Munich and Berlin have been included: altogether a set of about 6.500 further descriptions. Simultaneously, information from current cataloguing projects is fed into the database prior to printing. At the moment, this includes projects at the Wuerttembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, at the Heidelberg University Library and at the new centre for manuscript research at the Leipzig University Library. Finally, the short description project covering the about 5,400 Manuscripta Germanica at the Berlin State Library may be regarded as being of exemplary significance. Within five years most of the information, so far only locally available, will be made accessible on the Internet. This will include, for example, details from the mostly handwritten inventories enhanced by bibliographical information about the manuscripts.

The content of the “Manuscripta mediaevalia” database has by now exceeded that of the “Gesamtindex” and retrieval facilities were enhanced and refined. As a result of the data migration from the “Gesamtindex” and the corresponding conversion activities, “Manuscripta

mediaevalia” provides possibilities of combined queries on persons, place names, corporate bodies, dates, decoration, codicological information and initials. To support retrieval, controlled vocabularies are used and various authority files have been integrated.

Scenario 2: A user is in search of information about a *specific manuscript*.

The most indicative and reliable information about a specific manuscript is perhaps most often provided by the detailed scholarly description in a printed catalogue. At this point, “Manuscripta mediaevalia”’s “manuscript-catalogues-on-line”-section enters the stage. More than 175 manuscript catalogues and thus more than 20,000 descriptions are available on-line as digital images which can be accessed through a simple query for the shelf-mark. As a search result, the first page of the description in question is displayed and from there on the user can navigate through the entire catalogue. Instead of performing a query one can also browse a geographical list of libraries represented in “Manuscripta mediaevalia” and their published catalogues. For each catalogue there is an overview of its contents to which the images of its single pages are linked. Besides the descriptions themselves, the introduction, the indices and the illustrations of the catalogues are also available. Thus the quintessence of four decades of German manuscript cataloguing is presented in a simple but convenient fashion.

Scenario 3: A user has gathered relevant information from indices and descriptions and now wants to check his findings with *the manuscript itself*.

No digital image available on the Internet will ever make the examination of the original manuscripts redundant. An in-depth analysis of a manuscript, including the details of decoration and binding or of the materials used, will always require physical contact with the codex itself. On the other hand, a good deal of scholarly questions may be answered on the basis of digital images available on the Internet without having to visit libraries abroad. Therefore the third information level of “Manuscripta mediaevalia” besides the database and “manuscript-catalogues-on-line” is a selection of digitized manuscripts. 36 complete codices are accessible at the moment, 26 of them as colour images. Thus about 18.000 illustrations can be leafed through and easily navigated. In the long run it is intended to present a much larger number of images in order to enhance the information value of “Manuscripta mediaevalia”. Yet, one principle of manuscript digitization within “Manuscripta mediaevalia” is the combination of image and content, in other words, images will always be linked to manuscript descriptions.

These three information levels of “Manuscripta mediaevalia” - database, “manuscript-catalogues-on-line” and images from the manuscripts themselves - form distinct retrieval options. To increase the benefit for the user, these options are integrated as well. Both the catalogue images and the illustrations from the manuscripts are included in the database search operation. In this way a search result will usually consist of an index entry which is linked to the text of the manuscript description itself. Existing manuscript images are integrated into the database as well and are displayed as expandable thumbnails in the corresponding documents.

The Internet presence of “Manuscripta mediaevalia” is supplemented by a link list on international manuscript research as well as a mailing list for everyone interested in the topic of mediaeval and early modern manuscripts.

Since spring 2002, “Manuscripta mediaevalia” is permanently administered by a Maintenance Agency located in Berlin, Marburg and Munich. Still, it remains a "work in progress". Continuous addition and upgrading of data as well as further technological

development will shape the future appearance of the venture. Therefore suggestions regarding both contents and presentation are appreciated any time.
[<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de>]

From the Editors:

Have you recently looked up the homepage of our section? You should do so, as it has been revised in May, and - just in case you need some remembrance - there is the Strategic Plan for 2001 - 2003.

Have a good time, and see you at Glasgow,

Sincerely,

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