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QUÆRENDO 46 (2016) 222-240

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The Library as History

Library History Research after the Cultural Turn

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Abstract

The traditional library history is institution oriented. The cultural turn of the humanities brings new themes into the focus of historical research. Culture is seen as a heterogeneous open and dynamic 'polysystem' and as a repertoire of action. The 'reception' of the book is seen as a constructive activity. Libraries are of special value for cultural research: they host the most extensive and little known collections of documents for the history of the human mind. Libraries should provide in addition to the bibliographic description copy specific description, provenance and collection information for the reconstruction of libraries. So they can contribute to main fields of historical anthropological research like memory, cultural transfer, cultural monuments or gender studies. International cooperation is needed to alleviate the access to the almost limitless stores of research sources.

Keywords

library history – humanities – cultural turn

Terentianus Maurus's remark *Habent sua fata libelli* is often quoted when the destinies of books and libraries are being discussed. The complete version *Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli*,¹ however, puts the reader at the centre of the book. Libraries, their books and collections used to be the domain of library historians. The history of libraries as institutions was mainly seen as a story of the improvement and professionalization of their management, buildings, classification and user services. This focus on institutions, countries and

1 M. Terentianus, *De litteris, syllabis, pedibus et metris liber*, verse 1268.

nations and their leaders was typical not only for library history but for traditional research in all fields of history. To quote the German historian Leopold von Ranke, the aim was to write history ‘as it really was’, but concentrating on the political history of countries and institutions, and using diplomatic papers in the archives as the main sources. Culture was not part of the focus of this traditional historiography.

The Cultural Turn and Historical Cultural Anthropology

The word ‘culture’ has many different meanings: in an ontological sense, it is the opposite of nature, encompassing all human activities, from gardening to the social community. In an aesthetic interpretation, culture is the representation of the various arts: this is a concept mainly of institutional and political culture. Culture as a life form, the ‘whole way of life’,² was one of the key terms for cultural studies when this discipline developed in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s. This wider definition of culture made ‘the moment of historical anthropology’³ with new themes and trends leading to post-colonialism and gender studies. Microhistory⁴ does not focus on political leaders or other important persons but rather, for example, on a poor miller in Friuli (his reading is a key element of a study by Carlo Ginzburg),⁵ or the weavers in a small town (their book collections are covered in Hans Medick’s social history of Laichingen).⁶ There were no limits to additional themes:⁷ histories of the body or sentiments were written; and the cultural history of material, habitations and buildings aroused interest. It is quite clear that book and library studies – e.g. the archaeology of books and the development of library buildings – are becoming of wider interest outside the library research community. As a result, more and more publications, or at least chapters in publications of different disciplines, are valuable contributions to library history.

2 R. Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Fontana communications series, 3479; 5th edn.; London 1979), p. 87.

3 P. Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge 2004).

4 G. Levi, ‘Micro-history’, in: *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. P. Burke (2nd edn.; University Park (Pa.) 2001), pp. 97–119.

5 C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore 1980).

6 H. Medick, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen 1650-1900: Lokalgeschichte als allgemeine Geschichte* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 126; 2nd edn.; Göttingen 1997).

7 Burke, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 57–72.

This development is reinforced by the meaning of culture in fields such as structural semiotics, where it encompasses many practices of the production of meaning.⁸ The (language-driven) construction of reality is the core insight of the Linguistic Turn,⁹ which was the starting point for a flurry of 'turns' in the humanities.¹⁰ It is neither possible nor necessary to describe this new research landscape (which sometimes looks more like a jungle) in any full sense, but there are plenty of opportunities for new research in library history.¹¹

Book and library history are closely connected. Historical book studies began in libraries; libraries have been needed as sources of their research. Hence, many aspects of Robert Darnton's article on 'What is the history of books?' are valuable for the history of libraries.¹² Traditionally, books have been seen as texts, which have been copied or printed, distributed and read; they are cultural artefacts of social communication, but they are mainly texts. Moreover, the history of reading takes a mainly text-oriented approach. One of the great achievements of the French *Annales* School was to provide insights into trends in book production and reading based on quantitative analyses of private libraries as part of the history of mentalities or of attitudes.¹³ Numerous articles in the *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises* use quantitative methods.¹⁴ But they give only limited insights: Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton and George Thomas Tanselle criticized the narrow focus of counting methods for cultural objects.¹⁵ The social history of the use of books, and the influence of reading as

8 A. Hepp, *Cultural Studies und Medienanalyse: eine Einführung* (3rd edn.; Wiesbaden 2010), pp. 41 ff.

9 D. Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, in: *Rororo Rowohlt's Enzyklopädie*, 55675 (4th edn.; Reinbek bei Hamburg 2010), p. 36; *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method; with two retrospective essays*, ed. R.M. Rorty (Chicago 1993).

10 Bachmann-Medick, op. cit. (n. 9).

11 E. Mittler, 'Historische Bibliotheksforschung. Anthropologisch-kulturwissenschaftliche Ansätze und Methoden – Die digitale Wende', in: *Handbuch Methoden der Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft. Bibliotheks-, Benutzerforschung, Informationsanalyse*, ed. K. Umlauf & P. Hauke (Berlin 2013), pp. 483-524 (501-5) gives a first overview.

12 R. Darnton, 'What is the history of books?', *Daedalus*, 111 (1982), pp. 65-83.

13 H.J. Martin, *Print, Power, and People in 17th-Century France* (Metuchen (N.J.) 1993); M. Marion, *Collections et collectionneurs de livres au XVIII^e siècle* (Histoire du livre et des bibliothèques, 1; Paris 1999).

14 *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises*, 4 vols. (2nd edn.; Paris 2008).

15 R. Bromley, 'Cultural studies gestern und heute', in: *Cultural studies: Grundlagentexte zur Einführung*, ed. R. Bromley et al. (Lüneburg 1999), pp. 9-24; A. Johns, 'Science and the Book in Modern Cultural Historiography', *Studies in history and philosophy of science*, 29 (1998), pp. 167-94, esp. pp. 169-172; G.T. Tanselle, 'Introduction', in: *Books and Society in History:*

a cultural trigger of the French Revolution, were new fields of book and library history research.¹⁶ The history of science in English-speaking countries also emphasized book research with its ‘attention to the roles of authorship, distribution and reception of works within particular sciences in particular periods’.¹⁷

Michel Foucault is deconstructing the book as object when he sees it as a node in the net of semantic connections and citations of other publications.¹⁸ But the book can regain its missing significance in the close connection with its neighbours in the library. As Peter Burke states, libraries are therefore the correct place ‘to study the “archaeology of knowledge” in the literal sense of Foucault’s famous phrase, examining the physical remains of old classification systems’.¹⁹

In any case, Foucault also sees the book mainly as an intermediary of the text. With the ‘historical anthropology of the book’, Nadezda Sheshenko wants to go beyond the information-focused horizons of the book.²⁰ According to her, the book is part of the world of objects, which develops through social interactions and socio-cultural practices; she uses as an example the relations of the family members of the Duke of Prussia to the book during the time of the Reformation. It is a kind of ethnological view, which looks at the book in the context of behaviour and acting strategies.²¹ The book as a donation is, for example, ‘a bearer of benefits and duties’ in the Early Modern Period.²²

Papers of the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscript Preconference, 24-28 June, 1980, Boston, Massachusetts, ed. K.E. Carpenter (New York 1983), pp. xvii-xxiv.

- 16 R. Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, transl. L.G. Cochrane (Bicentennial reflections on the French Revolution; Durham (N.C.) 1991); R. Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d’Ancien Régime* (L’Univers historique; Paris 1987).
- 17 *Books and the Sciences in History*, ed. Frasca-Spada & N. Jardine (Cambridge 2000), pp. 3 ff. cited after Nadežda N. Ševčenko, *Eine historische Anthropologie des Buches: Bücher in der preußischen Herzogsfamilie zur Zeit der Reformation; mit 5 Tabellen* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 234; Göttingen 2007), p. 17.
- 18 M. Foucault, *Archäologie des Wissens*, transl. U. Köppen (Frankfurt am Main 1973), pp. 35 ff.
- 19 P. Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge* (Cambridge 2000), pp. 92 ff.
- 20 Ševčenko, op. cit. (n. 17), p. 19.
- 21 B. Scribner, ‘Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe’, in: *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, ed. R.P.-C. Hsia & R.W. Scribner (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, 78; Wiesbaden 1997), pp. 11-34, gives an overview of historical anthropology and research strategies of the ethno-historian.
- 22 N. Zemon Davies, ‘Beyond the Market. Books as Gifts in Sixteenth-Century France’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 33 (1983), pp. 69-89, esp. p. 69. Citation after Ševčenko, op. cit. (n. 17), p. 21; see also G. Algazi, ‘Doing Things with Gifts’, in: *Negotiating*

The meaning of an object is part of the interaction and the experience of the person.²³ So books are no longer neutral texts transporting information tools and part of the 'discourse', they are objects of material culture with which people interact. Here culture is seen as a heterogeneous open and dynamic 'polysystem' and as a repertoire of action.²⁴ One central question is: what do people do with books and how do they do it?²⁵

The ownership of books can be used as 'cultural' capital in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu, as a factor in a search of 'distinction'.²⁶ The history of changing practices and 'cultural uses' of reading in Europe and different countries comes into focus.²⁷ The reader and the reading are seen in a more active role: the 'reception' of the book is seen as a constructive activity.²⁸ The 'social construction of reality' is one key research approach of social constructionism, which has greatly influenced cultural history.²⁹ Class, gender, communities and the creation of individual identities are the main themes.³⁰ Books and other media

the Gift. Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange, ed. G. Algazi, V. Groebner & B. Jussen (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 188; Göttingen 2003), pp. 9-27.

- 23 E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory [and] Other Essays* (London 1978); id., *Das Elend der Theorie: Zur Produktion geschichtlicher Erfahrung* (Frankfurt am Main 1980), pp. 46 ff.
- 24 I. Even-Zohar, 'Factors and Dependencies in Culture. A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature – Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée*, 24 (1997), pp. 15-34.
- 25 G. Algazi, 'Kulturkult und die Rekonstruktion von Handlungsrepertoires', in: *L'Homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, 11 (2000), pp. 105-19, 113, 118; P. Cattrysse, 'The Polysystem Theory and Cultural Studies', *Canadian Review of Comparative literature – Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée*, 24 (1997), pp. 49-55.
- 26 P. Bourdieu, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement* (Le sens commun; Paris 1979); P. Bourdieu, & R. Nice, *Distinctio. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London 2010).
- 27 *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. G. Cavallo, R. Chartier & L.G. Cochrane (Studies in print culture and the history of the book; Amherst 2003); R. Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton (N.J.) 1987); *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. J. Raven (Cambridge 1996).
- 28 W. Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (UTB für Wissenschaft Uni-Taschenbücher Literaturwissenschaft, 636, 4th edn.; München 1994); id., *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore 1978).
- 29 P.L. Berger & T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City (N.Y.) 1966).
- 30 Burke, op. cit. (n. 2), pp. 80-90.

play an important part in the process of the communicative construction of social and cultural reality.³¹

Library History Research

As we have seen, there are plenty of research concepts in the field of cultural studies, some of which have been controversial in scholarly discussions. But all of them have their own value for different purposes. It is typical, perhaps, that cultural studies do not have one distinctive method; sometimes they use an improvised mix of disparate methods.³² But the use of libraries as research material is of special value for cultural research. Libraries host the most extensive and the least-known collections of documents for the history of the human mind. Four areas of book and library studies are of special interest to researchers.

Content – Bibliographic Description

One might say that, in a certain sense, bibliographic description takes a content-oriented approach. In modern libraries, cataloguing is the main prerequisite for library usage. Medieval catalogues instead are often mere inventories. Different kinds of catalogues and cataloguing rules give us information about library users' needs. These catalogues and the physical libraries themselves (pulpits, shelves...) combine to give us information, mainly in open access libraries, which started as chained libraries in the Middle Ages. From the small private library to the largest national libraries, the descriptions of books in catalogues provide information about content and can be used to answer questions about the size, languages, subjects, etc., of holdings. Information about different aspects of various libraries (types of libraries, a certain period, a certain country, etc.) can answer questions about the special interests of individuals and also about the exchange of literature between countries. In addition, catalogues, inventories and lists of sales can help to reconstruct lost libraries. In Göttingen, many sale catalogues of libraries created by professors, offer an

31 N. Couldry & A. Hepp, 'Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts, Traditions, Arguments', *Communication Theory*, 23 (2013), pp. 191-202.

32 Bromley, art. cit. (n. 15), pp. 23 ff.; K. Canning, 'Problematische Dichotomien: Erfahrung zwischen Narrativität und Materialität', *Historische Anthropologie*, 10 (2002), pp. 163-82, esp. 169.

insight into the 'academic innards' of their owners, as Lichtenberg noted.³³ On the other hand, OCLC's WorldCat could be used for worldwide studies about the inter-cultural distribution of writers in different languages or preferred subjects in the libraries of our globalized world.

*The Materiality of Books – Analytical Bibliography and
Copy-Specific Description*

Analytical bibliography examines the material features of a textual artefact such as type, ink, paper, format, layout, and so on. 'Forms effect meanings' is the background of D.F. McKenzie's interest in different presentations of the same content (including, besides print, other media like film, etc.).³⁴ Henri-Jean Martin's studies on the 'mise en page et mise en texte' address the many aspects of layout and design.³⁵ The relationship between book owners and their possessions is visible in the book's materiality.³⁶ The most promising areas are binding research and the analysis of margins. Ilse Schunke prepared an exemplary study of the Palatina bindings; Mirjam Foot discusses bindings as a mirror of society.³⁷ National and international cooperative research will be improved through databases like the *Einbanddatenbank* (EBDB).³⁸ Marks in margins are the most meaningful signs of reading;³⁹ and Henrik Otto has

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- 33 G. Streich, 'Die Büchersammlungen Göttinger Professoren im 18. Jahrhundert', in: *Öffentliche und private Bibliotheken im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert: Raritätenkammern, Forschungsinstrumente oder Bildungsstätten?; [Vorträge gehalten anlässlich des 1. Wolfenbütteler Symposions vom 24. bis 26. September 1975 in der Herzog August Bibliothek]*, ed. P. Raabe (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, 2; Bremen, Nendeln 1977), pp. 241-99; a detailed characterization of the library of the Göttingen professor Kulenkamp is given by A. Pozzo, *Membra disiecta: Inhalt und Wirkung der Bibliothek des Göttinger Professors Lüder Kulenkamp (1724-1794)* (Berliner Arbeiten zur Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft, 25; Berlin 2014; Univ. Diss.-Berlin, 2013).
- 34 D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge (U.K.), New York 1999), p. 4.
- 35 H.-J. Martin & J. Vezin, *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit* (Paris 1990); H.-J. Martin, *La naissance du livre moderne: (XIV^e-XVII^e siècles); mise en page et mise en texte du livre français* (Paris 2000).
- 36 D. Pearson, *Books as History. The Importance of Books beyond their Texts* (London 2012).
- 37 I. Schunke, *Die Einbände der Palatina in der Vatikanischen Bibliothek* (Città del Vaticano 1962); M. Foot, *The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society* (The Panizzi Lectures; London 1998).
- 38 www.hist-einband.de.
- 39 *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*, ed. R. Myers, M. Harris & G. Mandelbrote (Publishing pathways; New Castle (Del.) 2005); *Überlieferungs- und Gebrauchsspuren in historischen Buchbeständen: Symposion in Düsseldorf am 10. November 2009*,

shown how they can be used for reception studies.⁴⁰ Copy-specific description in library catalogues is a task undertaken by more and more libraries.⁴¹ The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) and its *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (MEI) database present a clear example of international cooperation.⁴² Another key element for the history of the 'practice' (Certeau)⁴³ of reading are the changes in the reading environment (e.g. furniture, time for leisure etc.).⁴⁴

Provenance

David Pearson offers a comprehensive overview of all aspects of provenance research with a focus on the English cultural area.⁴⁵ Searching for items that were once part of libraries is sometimes like a detective story, as witnessed by the labyrinthine avenues of the scattered former Heidelberg Palatina (Fig. 1).⁴⁶

This case also demonstrates very clearly the essential nature of international cooperation in the field of provenance. Here again, CERL is at the forefront with research facilities, social computing and conferences.⁴⁷

Collections

The information provided through copy-specific cataloguing and collecting of provenance information offers opportunities for the reconstruction of lost libraries. There are a number of projects rebuilding virtually, i.e. through

ed. H.P. Neuheuser (Kleine Schriften der Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln, 34; Köln 2012).

40 H. Otto, *Vor- und frühreformatorische Tauler-Rezeption: Annotationen in Drucken des späten 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, 75; Gütersloh 2003).

41 B. Wagner & M. Reed, *Early Printed Books as Material Objects* (IFLA publications, 149; Berlin, New York 2010).

42 www.cerl.org/resources/mei/main.

43 Burke, op. cit. (n. 3), p. 77.

44 E. Schön, *Der Verlust der Sinnlichkeit oder die Verwandlungen des Lesers: Mentalitätswandel um 1800* (Sprache und Geschichte, 12; Stuttgart 1987).

45 D. Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History. A handbook* (London 1998).

46 E. Mittler, 'The Bibliotheca Palatina: a Scattered Library Reconstructed', in: *Virtual Visits to Lost Libraries: Reconstruction of and access to dispersed collections; papers presented on 5 November 2010 at CERL Seminar hosted by the Royal Library of Denmark, Copenhagen*, ed. I. Boserup & D.J. Shaw (CERL papers, 11; London 2011), pp. 1-20.

47 www.cerl.org/resources/provenance/main.

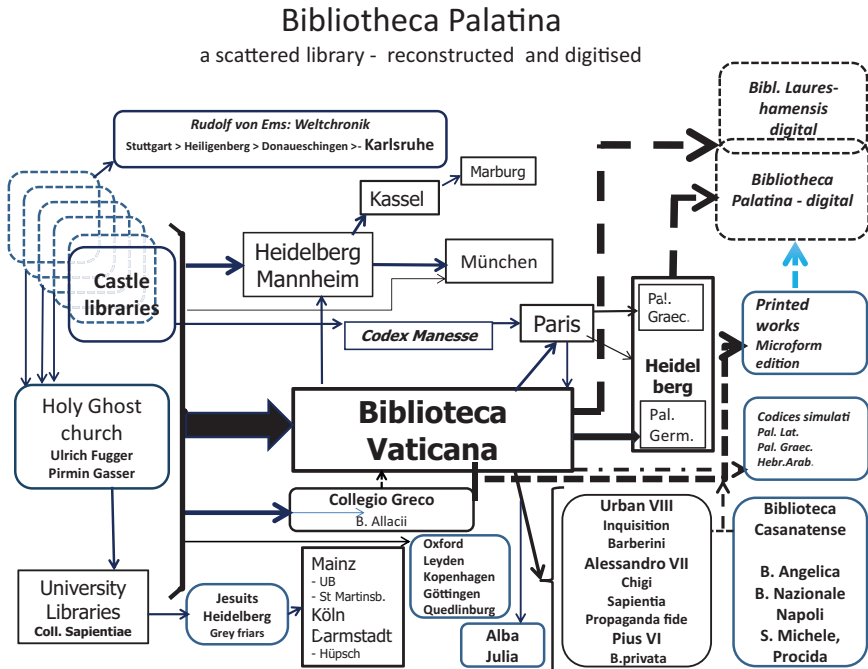


FIGURE 1

digitization, libraries that are scattered around the world.⁴⁸ In the case of the Palatina, there is a realistic chance of recreating the Heidelberg library and opening it up for the worldwide research community through modern technology.⁴⁹ A number of similar projects have also now been initiated.⁵⁰ Many publications give detailed information on private collections at different levels. A random choice of works illustrates the richness and diversity of studies of this kind,⁵¹ giving insights into the history of private libraries as part

48 *Virtual Visits to Lost Libraries*, op. cit. (n. 46).

49 E. Mittler, 'Wiedergewinnung durch Wissenschaft und Technik. Die europäische Buchkultur zwischen Original und Internetportal', in: *Zur Erforschung mittelalterlicher Bibliotheken* Klostermann, ed. A. Rapp and M. Embach (zweite Trierer Handschriften- und Bibliothekstagung; Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie Sonderbände, 97, 2009), pp. 291-304; K. Zimmermann, 'Bibliotheca Palatina and Bibliotheca Laureshamensis – digitised', in: *Virtual Visits to Lost Libraries*, op. cit. (n. 46), pp. 21-8.

50 E.g. St. Mathias Trier: stmatthias.uni-trier.de/index.php?id=1http://web.archive.org/web/2010514182937/; for other projects: wiki.netbib.de/coma/DigitaleHandschriften.

51 G. Crusius, *Aufklärung und Bibliophilie. Der Hannoveraner Sammler Georg Friedrich Brandes und seine Bibliothek* (Beihefte zum Euphorion, 54; Heidelberg 2008); G. Crusius,

of individual invention. But libraries are used for many other intellectual and social activities: collecting, reading and translating are, for example, among the roles of aristocratic libraries in the Early Modern Period.⁵² The dynamic role of (library) collections⁵³ is one of the most exciting aspects of the cultural anthropology of libraries.

Cultural Studies

The main focus of library history is changing with new research methods and the interests of cultural history. Library history as institutional or organizational history is really only of minor interest. Rather, the relevance of the library as part of the history of different fields of study is coming into greater focus.

Gender Studies

The recent escalation of interest in gender studies shows that the role of women in history has been to a large degree underestimated. Women could hold a strong position as a 'consort' (the spouse of a ruling monarch), as in the case of Empress Theophanu (c. 960-991).⁵⁴ Usually, they played their most

W. Adam, C. Junge & A. Prieuer, *Sammelkultur im Geist der Aufklärung. Die Bibliothek des Hannoveraner Beamten Georg Friedrich Brandes in der Landesbibliothek Oldenburg* (Schriften der Landesbibliothek Oldenburg, 51; Heidelberg 2010); T. Sander, 'Ex Bibliotheca Bunaviana. Studien zu den institutionellen Bedingungen einer adligen Privatbibliothek im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (Aufklärungsforschung, 6; Dresden 2011)', in: *Les humanistes et leur bibliothèque*, ed. R. de Smet (Travaux de l'Institut Interuniversitaire pour l'Étude de la Renaissance et de l'Humanisme, 13; Leuven 2002); R. Pullat, *Die Privatbibliotheken in Tallinn und Pärnu im 18. Jahrhundert: Tallinna ja Pärne eraraamatukogud 18. sajandil* (Tallinn 2009); P. Schad, *Buchbesitz im Herzogtum Württemberg im 18. Jahrhundert. Am Beispiel der Amtsstadt Wildberg und des Dorfes Bissingen/Enz* (Stuttgarter historische Studien zur Landes- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 1; Stuttgart 2002); V. Segesvary, *The History of a Private Library in 18th Century Hungary. The library of Pál and Gedeon Ráday* (Budapest 2007).

52 *Sammeln, Lesen, Übersetzen als höfische Praxis der Frühen Neuzeit. Die böhmische Bibliothek der Fürsten Eggenberg im Kontext der Fürsten- und Fürstinnenbibliotheken der Zeit*, ed. J. Bepler (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, 126; Wiesbaden 2010).

53 P. Strohschneider, 'Faszinationskraft der Dinge. Über Sammlung, Forschung und Universität', *Denkströme. Journal der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 8 (2012), pp. 9-26.

54 R. Kahsnitz, 'Ein Bildnis der Theophanu? Zur Tradition der Münz- und Medaillon-Bildnisse in der karolingischen und ottonischen Buchmalerei', in: *Kaiserin Theophanu:*

influential role when they had the wardship of a minor. As a rule, they had a significant influence on education and they played an important role at Royal Courts from the High Middle Ages. The troubadour songs of Duke William IX of Aquitaine (1071-1126) are the first written texts of these lyrics. His daughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, played an important role as patron at the English and Norman courts; she is mentioned in the songs of Bernard de Ventadour and in Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*.⁵⁵ Eleanor's daughter, Matilda of England (1156-1189), wife of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, was the subject of two songs of courtly love by the troubadour Bertran de Born, and – acting as an agent of cultural transfer – she was patron of the translation of the *Chanson de Roland* into Middle High German.⁵⁶ Many women were active in the Late Middle Ages as patrons or translators of vernacular literature, for example, Eleanor of Scotland (1433-1480), daughter of James I of Scotland (*Pontis and Sidonia*), Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken (*Herpin*) and Mechthild von Savoyen (Henfflin manuscripts).⁵⁷ In addition to vernacular literature, the religious book was also the domain of women. The *Sachsenspiegel*, a survey of Saxon law, shows a strong connection: the psalter is mentioned as part of the morning gift for a noble woman (a gift bestowed, usually on the morning after the wedding night, in accordance with German law).⁵⁸ Private psalters were in vogue in Central Europe from the end of the twelfth century.⁵⁹ It appears that this development was influenced by the Plantagenet court: Henry the Lion and Matilda of England possessed a small illuminated version.⁶⁰

Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends; Gedenkschrift des Kölner Schnütgen-Museums zum 100. Todesjahr der Kaiserin, ed. A. von Euw & P. Schreiner, 2 vols. (Köln 1991), pp. 101-34; F.-R. Erkens, 'Die Frau als Herrscherin in ottonisch-frühsalischer Zeit', in: *ibid.*, pp. 245-60.

- 55 J. Flori, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine: la reine insoumise* (Paris 2004), pp. 408-13.
- 56 V. Mertens, 'Deutsche Literatur am Welfenhof', in: *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit: Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125-1235: Katalog der Ausstellung Braunschweig 1995*, ed. J. Luckhardt, 2 vols. (München 1995), vol. 2: Essays, pp. 204-12, esp. 205.
- 57 See Cod. Pal. germ. 152 Cod. Pal. germ. 152 Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, Gräfin, 1393-1456 > Herpin (digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg152); part of the Henfflin-collection (digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg152).
- 58 *Sachsenspiegel* C.XXIIII see diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?pointer=62&dir=mss%2F3-1-aug-2f in the Wolfenbüttel manuscript Cod. Guelf. 3,1 Aug. 2° fol. XVII r.
- 59 B. Nicolai, 'Otto IV. und die Buchkunst um 1200. Das Psalterfragment ehemals Sammlung Beck und die Psalterillustration um 1200', in: *Otto IV: Traum vom welfischen Kaisertum*, ed. B.U. Hucker et al. (Petersberg 2009), pp. 129-36, 133 ff.
- 60 J. Backhouse, 'Psalter Heinrichs des Löwen: London, The British Library, Lansdowne S381, part 1', in: *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit*, op. cit. (n. 56), vol. 2, pp. 294-6; other examples are e.g. the 'Leiden St Louis Psalter', (Latin, Parchment, 185 folios, 24,5 × 17,7 cm,

The special connection of women to prayer books continued up to the early modern period.⁶¹

Many *dames de lettres* can be found in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. But Christine de Pizan (1364–after 1429) is the most exciting example of a woman, who not only *owned* a library but wrote so many books that she *built* a ‘library’ as well; in addition, her works were so popular at European courts that copies can be found in many libraries. Through her works of literature, she provides an example of the construction of identity.⁶² Using examples from the past, *The Book of the City of Ladies* defends women against the misogynistic literature of the time; in *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* she instructs women from all walks of life on how to cultivate personal and social qualities.⁶³

Christine de Pizan was a model for *women of distinction* like Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, the third wife of Charles the Bold (1446–1503), and Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), governor of the Habsburg Netherlands.⁶⁴ After many cruel misfortunes (she was repudiated by the French King Charles VIII and her two husbands died), Margaret of Austria cultivated her library as part of the rich collections at her court in Mechelen,⁶⁵ where she educated young noblemen, the most prominent of whom was her nephew, the future Emperor Charles V. From these examples, we can see that women’s libraries and

23 miniatures. Historiated initials. Northern England, 1190–1200. Leiden, University Library: BPL 76A) originally produced for Geoffrey Plantagenet, Archbishop of York, probably in northern England in the 1190 or the Elisabethpsalter Psalterium Beatae Elisabeth. Cividade del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale ms. CXXXVII and the Landgrafensalter: Psalterium non feriatum – Stuttgart HB II 24 (digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/purl/bsz351035532).

- 61 J. Bepler, ‘The Use of Prayer Books at Court: the Example of Wolfenbüttel’, in: *Gebetsliteratur der frühen Neuzeit als Hausfrömmigkeit: Funktionen und Formen in Deutschland und den Niederlanden*, ed. F. van Ingen & C.N. Moore (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, Bd. 92; Wiesbaden 2001), pp. 47–62.
- 62 B. Zühlke, *Christine de Pizan in Text und Bild. Zur Selbstdarstellung einer frühhumanistischen Intellektuellen* (Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung, 36; Stuttgart 1994).
- 63 L. Dulac, *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge. Études autour de Christine de Pizan* (Medievalia Études christiniennes, 16; Orléans 1995); M. Zimmermann, *Christine de Pizan* (s.l. 2002); J. de Caluwé-Dor, *Christine de Pizan. Une femme de science, une femme de lettres* (Études christiniennes, 10; Paris 2008).
- 64 *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York & Margaret of Austria*, ed. D. Eichberger (Leuven, 2005).
- 65 T. Romelli, *Bewegendes Sammeln: das studiolo von Isabella d’Este und das petit cabinet von Margarete von Österreich im bildungstheoretischen Vergleich* (Berlin 2008).

reading between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance form a research field of special interest.⁶⁶

The Reformation was a time of emancipation for women. Elisabeth von Brandenburg (1510-1558) is an outstanding example.⁶⁷ She had personal connections to Martin Luther and introduced the Reformation to the territory of Brunswick-Lüneburg during her Regency after the death of her husband, Eric I, in 1540. Her son subsequently renounced the Reformation despite his Protestant education and the good advice he received from his mother in the *Regierungshandbuch* (1545). After this disharmony, she had a difficult time; she wrote the *Trostbuch für Witwen* (printed edition, 1556) about her experiences. Her good relations with her daughter can be deduced not only from her book of advice to her (*Mütterlicher Unterricht*, 1550) but also in the gift of a copy of the *Regierungshandbuch* in a silver binding. The latter was also the starting point for the famous Silver Library (*Silberbibliothek*)⁶⁸ created by Anna-Maria and Albert, Duke of Prussia, in Königsberg, an outstanding example of princely splendour.

A much more powerful position was enjoyed by Sophia Jagiellon (1522-1575) in her widow seat in Schöningen.⁶⁹ In addition to religious books like the psalter and the Bible, her collection of law books reveals her interest in political issues. She was able to negotiate an agreement with Julius, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, with the help of her brother King Sigismund II Augustus and Emperor Maximilian II.

66 A.-M. Legaré, *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre moyen âge et renaissance* (Turnhout 2007); M. Zimmermann, *Salon der Autorinnen: Französische 'dames de lettres' vom Mittelalter bis zum 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2005).

67 A. Lilienthal, *Die Fürstin und die Macht: Welfische Herzoginnen im 16. Jahrhundert: Elisabeth, Sidonia, Sophia* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens, Bd. 127; Hannover 2007), pp. 31-182; E. Schlotheuber, *Herzogin Elisabeth von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1510-1558): Herrschaft, Konfession, Kultur* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens, 132; Hannover 2011).

68 P. Schwenke, *Die Silberbibliothek Herzog Albrechts von Preussen und seiner Gemahlin Anna Maria: Festgabe der Königlichen und Universitäts-Bibliothek Königsberg in Preussen zur 350jährigen Jubelfeier der Albertus-Universität* (Leipzig 1894); A. Rohde, *Die Silberbibliothek des Herzogs Albrecht in Königsberg* (Bilderhefte des deutschen Ostens; Königsberg 1928); *Srebrna biblioteka księcia Albrechta Pruskiego i jego żony Anny Marii*, ed. J. Tondel, W. Górski & J. Gosieniecka (Warsaw 1994).

69 Lilienthal, op. cit. (n. 67), pp. 241-84.

Anna Amalia of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1739-1807) is the only woman who not only had an important private library⁷⁰ but also established a now internationally famous library that bears her name. Just one year after assuming the regency for her son Carl August, constructions began on converting the Green Castle into a library and a home for the art collection of the Dukes of Weimar.⁷¹ The library was the heart of the *Musenhof* and a source of knowledge for Goethe, who directed the library between 1797 and 1832.

Memory

Emperor Maximilian I had a special programme of 'gedechtnus'.⁷² As his legacy, he instructed the collection of old German literature in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* (between 1504 and 1516) and the description of the country in manuscripts on fishing and hunting (*Fischereibuch und Geheimes Jagdbuch*). In addition, he used printing as a medium for the active preservation of his memory. In the epic poems 'Theuerdank' and 'Freydal', and in the chivalric novel *Weisskunig*, he prepared a series of works, illustrated with woodcuts, about his life and deeds.⁷³ These were intended as gifts to princely libraries as fitting places of commemoration. The *Triumphal Arch* (1512-18) was used for immediate political propaganda as it hung at the Reichstag in the town halls of Regensburg and the free imperial city of Nuremberg. The long (49 metres) *Triumphal Procession* (Triumphzug) was to be attached to walls in city halls or palaces as friezes of a royal entrance, thereby simulating one of the popular ceremonial events of the time depicting the power of the Emperor.⁷⁴ Maximilian's works of memory are still waiting to be completed in the unfinished monumental *cenotaph* (Innsbruck, Hofkirche).

Libraries are not only places to commemorate one individual, but are institutions of cultural memory for literate societies. The continuity of traditions in oral societies depends on the memories of living persons, while literate societies – at least at first glance – have a much safer medium in the form of

70 B. Raschke, 'Die Bibliothek der Herzogin Anna Amalia', in: *Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek: Kulturgeschichte einer Sammlung*, ed. M. Knoche & I. Arnhold (München 1999), pp. 83-6.

71 M. von Gehren, *Die Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar. Zur Baugeschichte im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Köln 2013).

72 J.-D. Müller, *Gedechtnus: Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I* (Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, 2; München 1982).

73 *Maximilians Ruhmeswerk: Künste und Wissenschaften im Umkreis Kaiser Maximilians I*, ed. J.-D. Müller & H.-J. Ziegeler (Berlin 2015).

74 *Kaiser Maximilian I. und die Kunst der Dürerzeit*, ed. E. Michel, M.L. Sternath & M. Hollegger (München 2012).

written or printed media. However, with the growing number of media it is no longer possible to retain the full range of stored books in the active memory. Unlike oral societies, which rely on the memory of the living brain, literate societies have a realistic chance of resurrecting stored and apparently lost knowledge.⁷⁵ The European Renaissance of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries was an age of resurrection of ancient knowledge 'sleeping' in monastic libraries (mainly in manuscripts of the Carolingian Renaissance of the eighth and ninth centuries). The result was a new age of reproduction (in manuscript and in print) and an age of – mainly princely – beautiful new libraries in, for example, the collections of Federico da Montefeltre, Matthias Corvinus and the Medici.⁷⁶

Cultural Transfer

The inner European cultural transfer from Antiquity to the early Middle Ages can be detected through the analysis of the production and migration of manuscripts of the *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, which demonstrates, for example, the extensive importation of Anglo-Irish manuscripts in the preparations for the Carolingian Renaissance.⁷⁷ Similar migration studies could be prepared for the manuscript era using the results of the codicology normally used for stemmatology in the preparation of critical editions.

The Carolingian Renaissance and the Renaissance of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries were a form of inter-cultural transfer of the Greco-Roman tradition. This also occurred to a certain extent during the Renaissance of the twelfth century,⁷⁸ but in this case it took place mainly via the translation of Arabic texts which were partly translations of works of Greek philosophers and scientists. Ptolemy's *Almagest* and many of the works of Aristotle, for instance, were translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona, the

75 J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München 1977); J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization. Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge 2011).

76 De Smet, op. cit. (n. 51); H. Wijssmann, 'Bibliothèques princières entre moyen âge et humanisme', in: *Matthias Corvin, les bibliothèques princières et la genèse de l'État moderne*, ed. J.-F. Maillard & I. Monok (Supplementum Corvinianum, 2; Budapest 2009), pp. 121-34; B. Roeck & A. Tönnemann, *Die Nase Italiens: Federico da Montefeltro, Herzog von Urbino* (2nd edn., Berlin 2005).

77 *Codices Latini Antiquiores: a Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*, ed. E.A. Lowe (Oxford 1934-71) (de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codices_Latini_Antiquiores#/media/File:Cla-migt.png).

78 C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge (Mass.) 1927).

most prolific translator of the School of Toledo.⁷⁹ Scholastic Europe (Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas) was highly influenced by translations of the works of Avicenna and Averroes. But there was also a strong transmission of Islamic works, which formed the foundation for medieval medicine, mathematics and astronomy (as well as astrology).

Greek Arabic texts were based on Islamic translations of the ninth and tenth centuries with Baghdad as the principal centre. The Houses of Wisdom containing the libraries of knowledge of the Abbasid Caliphs were centres of research and translation for the scientific literature of both West and East.⁸⁰ This cultural transfer brought about the Golden Age of Islam. There was a second wave of translations of Arabic texts at the courts of Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250) and Alfonso X of Castile (1221-1284).⁸¹

As part of the missionary work of the early seventeenth century, Jesuit libraries in China were built to the master plan of Nicolò Langobardo.⁸² Not only was a complete library created in Beijing, but local libraries were developed in other Chinese towns. They were successfully built in Jesuit houses or colleges in Beijing, Hangzhou and Macau. The libraries had well-equipped collections and were used as centres for an ambitious translation project. About five hundred books with translations of Western texts were published during the seventeenth century, a considerable number of them on European science and technology.⁸³ They form part of the influential role the Jesuits played in China in the second half of the seventeenth century. They had many contacts with Chinese researchers, performed state-commissioned expert services

79 C. Burnett, 'The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century', *SIIC*, 14 (2001), pp. 249-88.

80 G. Endreß, 'Neue Leser für alte Bücher: Lehrüberlieferung, Textüberlieferung und die Bewahrung des antiken Erbes in den Bibliotheken des arabisch-islamischen Raums', in: *Bibliotheken im Altertum*, ed. E. Blumenthal & W. Schmitz (Wolfenbütteler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens, 45; Wiesbaden 2011), pp. 173-200; Bromley, art. cit. (n. 15).

81 *Kulturtransfer und Hofgesellschaft im Mittelalter: Wissenskultur am sizilianischen und kastilischen Hof im 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gundula Grebner, Gundula (Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel, 15; Berlin 2008).

82 N. Golvers, *Libraries of Western learning for China. Circulation of Western Books between Europe and China in the Jesuit Mission (ca. 1650-ca. 1750)*, vol. 2 (Formation of Jesuit Libraries; Leuven 2013), pp. 9-16.

83 M. Schemmel, 'The Transmission of Scientific Knowledge from Europe to China in the Early Modern Period', in: *The Globalization of Knowledge in History. Based on the 97th Dahlem Workshop*, ed. J. Renn (Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge Studies, 1; Berlin 2012), pp. 269-93; Bromley, art. cit. (n. 15), p. 279.

in astronomy, military technology and geography, and were tutors to two Emperors. With their rich content and well-equipped rooms with *armaria* for the books, the libraries were ‘showcases of contemporary western learning in every domain.’⁸⁴ In addition to the church and the garden, they were a point of interest for the many visitors.⁸⁵ Learned Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci also had their own valuable collections. Prominent visitors like Emperor Kangxi admired the illustrations,⁸⁶ the printing techniques and the precious bindings.⁸⁷ The libraries gave the Jesuits the opportunity to demonstrate the value of European culture – and also a chance to promote themselves.⁸⁸

Libraries as Monuments

It is obvious that libraries are more than content providers. They are also communication media in themselves, through buildings and rooms. The foundation of the Apollo library for the palace of Augustus on the Palatine hill in Rome (the statue of Apollo held his head) was a symbol of his ideology as ruler of the state. The Vatican Library of Sixtus v has a series of frescoes showing the history of libraries that preceded the library of the Pope. It was a propaganda idea aimed at Protestant Centuriators, who in their *Ecclesiastica historia* had tried to diminish papal responsibility for early Christian libraries as well as the importance of recent Roman collections.⁸⁹ The majestic ceiling paintings of the baroque monastic libraries mainly in Catholic Austria and Southern Germany show divine wisdom as *sedes sapientiae* in the zenith above all sciences. They seem to be pictures of timeless harmony – but they are also Counter-Reformation propaganda against Protestantism and the Enlightenment, often

84 N. Golvers, ‘The Pre-1773 Jesuit Libraries in Peking as Medium for Western Learning in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century China’, *The Library*, 16 (2015), pp. 429-45, esp. 430.

85 F. Verbiest, *Astronomia Europæa ex Umbra in lucem revocata sub imperatore Tartaro Sinico Câm Hý appellato* (Dilingae 1687), p. 97.

86 Golvers, art. cit., (n. 83), pp. 432 f.

87 Ibid., p. 441.

88 Ibid., p. 445.

89 *Ecclesiastica Historia, Integram Ecclesiae Christi Ideam, Qvantvm Ad Locvm, Propagationem, Persecutionem, Tranquillitatem, Doctrinam, Hæreses, Ceremonias, Gubernationem, Schismata, Synodos, Personas, Miracula, Martyria, Religiones extra Ecclesiam, & statum Imperij politicum attinet, secundum singulas Centurias, perspicuo ordine complectens: singulari diligentia & fide ex uetustitissimis & optimis historicis, patribus, & alijs scriptoribus congesta*, ed. M. Flacius (Basileae 1559-74).

showing how heretics were condemned to hell.⁹⁰ Cardinal Mazarin's universal library was built by Gabriel Naudé as a monument to tolerance, and therefore included controversial literature. The books on the shelves were the unique decoration of the room, except for some busts of philosophers and poets. The Hofbibliothek in Vienna, in contrast, depicts the apotheosis of Emperor Charles VI on the ceiling as a monument of cultural policy. The domes of the British Museum and the Library of Congress are symbols of their role in the creation of nations. As memory and research institutions, they collect the national and international book production, hereby strengthening the nation's competitive scientific and technological power. The National Library of Latvia in Riga is a modern example of how a library (and a library building) can become a symbol for the independence of a small country.

Conclusion

Library history is an expanding area of research. The 'cultural turn' of the humanities brought innovative aspects and research fields. As a contribution to anthropological library history, the University of Osnabrück has set up a research college 'Wissensspeicher und Argumentationsarsenal. Funktionen der Bibliothek in den kulturellen Zentren der Frühen Neuzeit', with the Interdisziplinäre Institut für Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit (IKFN, University Osnabrück) and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel as partners.⁹¹ The contradictory roles of the library in the early modern period are at the heart of this research programme.

Every aspect of a library can now be seen in a different way. There is a growing awareness that libraries and their holdings are almost limitless stores of research sources ('fast uferlose Quellenfonds')⁹² for a great number of research

90 E. Mittler, 'Kunst oder Propaganda? Bibliothekarische Ausstattungsprogramme als Spiegel kultureller Entwicklungen und Kontroversen in Renaissance, Gegenreformation, Aufklärung und Klassizismus', in: *Proceedings of the Conference Ikonographie und Dekoration der Bibliotheken*, (Eger 2013), in print.

91 'Repositories of knowledge and arsenal of arguments. Functions of the library in the cultural centers of the early modern period' (Interdisciplinary Institute for Cultural History of the Early Modern Times: www.ikfn.uni-osnabrueck.de/promovieren_am_ikfn/graduierntenprogramm_wua/forschungsidee_methode.html).

92 A. Schlechter, 'Textträger, archäologisches Objekt und historischer Mosaikstein: Was bleibt vom Alten Buch?' in: *Das Ende der Bibliothek? Vom Wert des Analogon*, ed. U. Jochum (Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie Sonderbände, 105; Frankfurt am Main 2011), pp. 101-14, esp. 113.

purposes. But the focus is now the library as history, rather than the history of libraries. Librarians should provide as much information about the material aspects of libraries and holdings as they do about library contents. International standards, cooperative information facilities and research tools are all needed, and CERL can play a leading role in this development. The services offered by *Material Evidence in Incunabula* and the expansion of combined search facilities with CERL's *Heritage of the Printed Book* database and the *CERL-Thesaurus* are promising starting points.⁹³ They may help to initiate a kind of 'library turn' in the humanities with a new focus on the library as history.

93 www.cerl.org/resources/mei/main; thesaurus.cerl.org/cgi-bin/search.pl.