

Provenance  
Research  
*in*  
Book History

*A Handbook*

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# I | Introduction

## **The purpose and scope of this book**

This *Handbook* is a reference source for anyone who is concerned with the provenance – the previous ownership – of printed books and manuscripts. More specifically, its aim is to help researchers who may be involved in any or all of the following:

- Seeking to identify owners from inscriptions, bookplates, binding stamps or other marks found in particular books.
- Trying to trace the prior existence, extent or present whereabouts of books once owned by a particular individual.
- Looking to develop a greater understanding of copy-specific evidence in historic books and its value within the broader framework of book history.

It is not a history of book collecting or collectors (though it contains references to works in that field), and it cannot be comprehensive in the examples it illustrates of the kinds of markings which owners have left in their books. It aims rather to provide a historical overview of what is typical and what is less so, guidance on recognizing, deciphering and dating, signposts as to where to go next in understanding the many clues which books contain about their individual histories. The range of publications, both in print and online, which may be relevant to provenance research is potentially limitless, but there is a core of material which should be familiar to anyone working in this area, and one aim of the book is to ensure that it can be found here in an approachable and structured framework.

...nce; the collection is  
 ...ouldst have a double  
 ...e to prayer onely, doe  
 ...oe not goe to the Sa-  
 ...but oh see a Christ,  
 ...and then thou shalt  
 ...risedome to informe  
 ...ctification to cleanse  
 ...race, and power, and  
 ...ptions, from Christ  
 ...d to thy soule: and

...s we must have an eye  
 ...o wee must labour to  
 ...er of that Spirit, and  
 ...e which is in Christ,  
 ...; doe not onely eye a  
 ...in the promise, but  
 ...to the stroke of the  
 ...of the spirit; that by  
 ...ift bee inabled to doe

... 18. The holy Apo-  
 ...men should bee trans-  
 ...age of God; or as the  
 ...om one degree of glo-  
 ...more holy, and more  
 ...and more heavenly  
 ...d before, should now  
 ...that was faint hearted  
 ...more couragious; how  
 ...*Spirit of the Lord*, faith  
 ...t is not by your spirits  
 ... that

Joannis Stangeri - 1662  
 1662

2.2 'James Stanger owes [i.e. owns] this booke 1662', written down the outer margin of a page in the middle of a book

### Language

Many owners used the vernacular for their inscriptions in books, but Latin, whose influence on most European educational systems remained important until well into the nineteenth century, was commonly used until at least the middle of the eighteenth. English names are often Latinized – William Watson becomes *Gulielmus Watsonus*, John Brock becomes *Joannes Brocus*, and so on, and the inscriptions often follow the rules of Latin grammar by putting the name in the genitive case (*Joannis Broci codex* – the book of/ belonging to Joannes Brocus). Academic degrees are often expressed not as BA or MA as we know them today, but in their Latin forms, A.B. (*Artibus Baccalaureus*) or A.M. (*Artibus Magister*; see the table of abbreviations on p. 377–8 for other commonly encountered Latinized forms of academic and professional terminology). The example of Abraham Frank in fig. 2.3 is typical of

**3.7** Jacobean style: the bookplate of Richard Hopton (1685-1754)

**3.8** Jacobean style: the bookplate of George Baillie (1664-1738)

**3.9** Chippendale style: the bookplate of Francis Canning (d.1766)

The **Jacobean** style began to appear shortly before 1700 and was popular until about 1745, though its heyday was mostly after 1720. It is so named because its ornamentation is supposedly reminiscent of late-seventeenth-century woodwork, so the James in question is James II, but it is an unfortunate and confusing term given that James himself left the throne in 1688 and died in 1701. The bookplate of Richard Hopton, MP for Hertfordshire 1715-22, is an example (fig. 3.7); the basic concept of the mantled shield is still there, but the foliage mantling has become stiffer and less leaf-like, and can almost be pictured as carved wood. The scallop shell below the shield is a common feature of these Jacobean Armorialials. Another example, where the mantling is even stiffer and the scallop shell is again present, is the plate of George Baillie, dated 1724 (fig. 3.8).



For *the heir*  
or 1<sup>st</sup> *son*, the LABEL

2<sup>d</sup> *son*, the CRESCENT

3<sup>d</sup> *son*, the MULLET

4<sup>th</sup> *son*, the MARTLET

5<sup>th</sup> *son*, the ANNULET

6<sup>th</sup> *son*, the FLOWER-DE-LUCE

7<sup>th</sup> *son*, the ROSE

8<sup>th</sup> *son*, the CROSS-MOLINE

9<sup>th</sup> *son*, the *Double* QUATER-FOIL



9.4 The standard system of marks of cadency

proliferate over the generations, and different branches become established in several localities. To help overcome this, marks of cadency were devised so that sons added to their father's arms small charges denoting their relationship within the family. These marks are normally added at the head of the shield (i.e. *borne in chief*), unless the shield is quartered, in which case they are superimposed at the centre where the quarters meet. The standard system of cadency marks is shown in fig. 9.4.

These marks became established around the beginning of the sixteenth century; before then various other means of differentiating arms within families was used, such as the reversal of tinctures, or the transposition of charges. The eldest son retains his mark of cadency only during his father's lifetime, after which he adopts his father's arms without the label, but the marks for the other sons are supposed to remain a permanent feature so that their own sons take over the cadency mark, and