

Book ownership and the history of reading

Research databases and resources

(Descriptions are from information provided by the sites.)

The Archaeology of Reading in Early Modern Europe (AOR)

Uses digital technologies to explore the historical reading practices of Renaissance scholars through digitized copies of early printed books annotated by John Dee and Gabriel Harvey. Book subjects include agriculture, alchemy, ancient and medieval history, astrology, astronomy, humor, law, linguistics, mathematics, medicine, military theory, natural history, navigation, the occult, oratory, politics, poetry, and topography.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Inkunabelkatalog (BSB)

The largest single incunabula collection worldwide, with 20.337 copies of 9782 different editions. Accepts searches by BSB nos., GW nos., ISTC nos. VE15 nos., etc.

Bod-inc online (Oxford)

This catalogue of over 5000 Incunables of the Bodleian Library, University Oxford, includes searching and browsing by Owners, Donors, and Other Names.

Book Owners Online (David Pearson)

A directory of historical book owners, with information about their libraries, and signposts to further sources. It currently has entries for over 1900 British owners of the 17th and 18th centuries, and is being expanded. The project is a collaboration between the Bibliographical Society and the Centre for Editing Lives & Letters at UCL, with support from the Bodleian Library.

CERL resources. A number of resources related to book ownership have been and continue to be developed or hosted by the Consortium of European Research Libraries. See for example:

Early Book Owners in Britain

Private ownership of printed books in the late 15th and early 16th century. Gathered by Margaret Lane Ford for *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*. Hosted by CERL.

Owners of Incunabula

Owners of Incunabula is a satellite database of Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI) which gathers biographical information on former and present owners, both personal and institutional (and including binders, illuminators, booksellers, etc.).

Online provenance resources

International coverage, predominantly European.

Paul Needham's Index Possessorum Incunabulorum (IPI)

Contains some 32,000 entries of personal names, institutional names, monograms, and arms pertaining to the ownership of incunabula, extracted by Paul Needham from some 200 published catalogues of incunabula with provenance information, augmented with information from his personal research, and placed in a word file of some 1,267 pages or 500,565 words. (Full-text search made available by CERL.)

Inkunabelkatalog (INKA, Tübingen)

Incunable descriptions from 44 larger and smaller German and Austrian collections, with regular updates and additions. As of December 2010, INKA lists 15,915 editions and 67,178 copies. Includes a provenance search.

The Reading Experience Database (RED), 1450–1945

UK RED is an open-access database housed at The Open University containing over 30,000 easily searchable records documenting the history of reading in Britain from 1450 to 1945. Evidence of reading presented in UK RED is drawn from published and unpublished sources as diverse as diaries, commonplace books, memoirs, sociological surveys, and criminal court and prison records.