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## BIBLIOLOGY IN GERMANY — ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENTS AND CURRENT STATE

The origin and development of German bibliology as a discipline. The status of bibliology among the sciences. Organisation and institutionalisation of bibliological research. Research directions.

KEY WORDS: Germany, bibliology, historical development, research areas

### 1. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN BIBLIOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE

In Germany, the home country of Johannes Gutenberg and his invention of book printing with moveable and reusable letters, the first traces of bibliology worth mentioning were sparked by and intricately connected with the printing technique. The first thoughts about printing by savants and other people more or less directly engaged in this new technology can be found quite early on in colophons, usually rather short paragraphs at the end of books which contain information about the author, title of the work and sometimes also reflections on its production process.<sup>1</sup> The first known reference can be found only about ten years after Gutenberg's invention in the colophon of the *Catholicon*, an encyclopaedic reference work to the Latin Bible printed in 1460 in Mainz. It describes the printing technique as an important invention and gift to the German nation.<sup>2</sup> More profound bibliological

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<sup>1</sup> U. Rautenberg, "Kolophon", [in:] *Reclams Sachlexikon des Buches. Von der Handschrift zum E-Book. 3. vollständig überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage*, ed. U. Rautenberg, Stuttgart 2015, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> S. Füssel, "Frühe Reflexionen über den Buchdruck und die Folgen", [in:] *Einführung in die Buchwissenschaft*, eds. S. Füssel, C. Norrick-Rühl, Darmstadt 2014, pp. 13–14.

research activity by Bernhard von Mallinckrodt (1591–1664) was also kindled by Gutenberg’s invention. In his *De ortu ac progressu artis typographicae dissertatio historica*, published in Cologne in 1640, Mallinckrodt defended the thesis of Gutenberg being the inventor of the book printing technique.<sup>3</sup> Around the same time, incunabula emerged as a book category and objects of interest, collected and presented in specially dedicated bibliographies, the first of which was compiled by Mallinckrodt in 1639 and contained publishing details as well as information on the typography, binding, decoration and particularities of the copies used for the catalogue.<sup>4</sup>

Further on, around 1700, learned Germans dedicated themselves to a bibliographic project which aimed at collecting everything related to erudition, particularly books, and organising them thoroughly in order to write an overall history of scholarship which would show the previous research, its accomplishments, as well as its gaps and thereby stimulate further inquiries. Alongside this project, a method of analysing and ordering books was gradually developed,<sup>5</sup> which lay the grounds for the more profound and autonomous bibliographic research of the later 18th century. Today, the formation of a bibliographic profession in the course of the specialisation of scholars in the early modern period is considered to be the first emergence of bibliological research in Germany as well as the origin of library science.<sup>6</sup>

From this joint beginning on, bibliology and library science have been intricately connected with each other. Around 1800 the book traders also started engaging with the commerce of books itself, legal issues and biographies of companies and entrepreneurs alike.<sup>7</sup> In the course of the historicist movement, in

<sup>3</sup> Idem, “Buchwissenschaftliche Fragestellungen in wissenschaftlichen Publikationen, Bibliografien und Enzyklopädien des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts”, [in:] *Einführung in die Buchwissenschaft...*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> S. Corsten, “Von Bernhard von Mallinckrodt zu Ludwig Hain. Ziele und Methoden der frühen Inkunabelbibliographie”, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 1995, no 70, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> E. Engl, *Die medizinisch-naturkundliche Bibliothek des Nürnberger Arztes Christoph Jacob Trew. Analyse einer Gelehrtenbibliothek im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2020, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Einführung und kritische Auseinandersetzung”, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*, ed. U. Rautenberg, vol. 1, Berlin-New York 2010, p. 18; K. Migoń, *Das Buch als Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Forschung. Buchwissenschaft und ihre Problematik*, Wiesbaden 1990, p. 21; T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept. Entwicklungsstationen und Schwerpunkte der Diskussion. Ein Forschungsbericht”, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft — Medienwissenschaft. Ein Symposium*, ed. D. Kerlen, Wiesbaden 2004, p. 4; P. Vakkari, “The roots of library science in the internal and external discourse of historical-literaria in Germany”, *Discourse* 1994, no 70, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. the book *Der deutsche Buchhandel als Begründer des Daseins einer deutschen Literatur* (German book trade as the guarantor of the existence of German literature) published in 1815 by the bookseller Friedrich Christoph Perthes (1772–1843).

1876/77 this was further kindled and institutionalised by the founding of the Historische Kommission (historical commission) of the Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, the association of the German book trade.<sup>8</sup> Following the preceding publishing activities by some learned book traders, this commission established the journal “Archiv für Geschichte des Deutschen Buchhandels” (Archive for the history of the German book trade) as a platform for its own research.<sup>9</sup> Even though there was significant research activity within the book commerce itself, at this time it did not become an academic research area in its own right.

Alongside with this development, in the 19th century the term “Bibliothekswissenschaft” (library science) was coined by Martin Schrettinger (1772–1851) and this field emerged as a distinct discipline.<sup>10</sup> At first, it was solely focused on librarian tasks like collecting and cataloguing books. But with the work of e.g. Johann Georg Seizinger (1810–1865), and particularly from 1886 onwards, when the first professorial chair for auxiliary library science was installed and the university subject of library science was slowly equated with library science itself, it incorporated further relevant research areas, including many aspects of book science, e.g. the history of the book, incunabula studies etc.<sup>11</sup>

In 1925, a professorial chair for book retailing management, focussed on the book trade and its educational training, was founded at the university in Leipzig with financial support of the Börsenverein as the first academic chair on its own in the field of bibliology.<sup>12</sup> Even though this granted some academic autonomy to book science, also reinforced by the establishment of further chairs, since the 1950s and 1960s there are discussions about how self contained bibliology as a (former) historical auxiliary science is and can be.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. THE STATUS OF BIBLIOLOGY AMONG THE SCIENCES

Due to this historic development of bibliology evolving from the same roots as several other book related sciences, bibliological research originally being executed in a broad variety of institutions and professions, and the lack of an en-

<sup>8</sup> T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept...”, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> This journal was published in twenty issues between 1878 and 1898. More than thirty years later, in 1930, a final issue was released. M. Estermann, “Die Historische Kommission des Börsenvereins des Deutschen Buchhandels”, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 759, 762.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*; K. Migoń, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland...”, pp. 19–20.

<sup>13</sup> For these debates see in detail *ibidem* pp. 31–41; T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept...”, pp. 14–16.

compassing book theory or model of its own, bibliological questions are not only raised and addressed exclusively by book scientists, but also in a number of other disciplines. With bibliography successfully claiming today to be a discipline in its own right, it sees its task not in monopolising, but rather in integrating all book-related research which is executed mainly throughout the faculty of humanities in universities.<sup>14</sup>

Bibliology has common antecedents with the history of sciences, literary studies, bibliography and more recently library science, and historically there were especially deep connections and overlaps between these research areas. Out of these fields, probably the most intricate connection has been established with library science, as both library and book science deal with the book in a similar way as a material object and an information medium — though with a different focus. Until as late as 1998, bibliology was also conjoined academically with library science as “Buch- und Bibliothekskunde” (book and library science).<sup>15</sup> Especially in the area of historical auxiliary methods, which belong to analytical bibliography as e.g. font analysis (Typenkunde), librarians such as Konrad Haebler (1857–1946) made significant contributions to bibliology.<sup>16</sup>

This historical connection and the evolution of bibliology as a discipline is also visible in the development of librarian classification systems. In Germany, the term “systematic” was considered to be synonymous with the term “scholarly” until the early 20th century, and librarians developed in-depth classification systems relatively independent of their European neighbours to meet the particular needs and demands of the German scientific community.<sup>17</sup> In the influential classification system by the orientalist and librarian Andreas August Ernst Schleiermacher (1787–1858) from the middle of the 19th century or in the schema of the librarian Otto Hartwig (1830–1903) published about thirty years later, both book and library science are still subsumed under the broad category of “Historia literaria”. It was positioned at the top of the classification system, as it was considered to be basic knowledge for any scholar and traditionally it also included knowledge about the history of printing and libraries.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft als Wissenschaft. Bestandsaufnahme und Erlanger Perspektiven”, [in:] *Neues vom Buch*, eds. D. Moser, A. Russegger, C. Drumm, Innsbruck 2011, pp. 42–44.

<sup>15</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland...”, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> See the project description of the Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke, <https://tw.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/html/index.xql> [retrieved: 23.08.2020].

<sup>17</sup> H. Kleinschmidt, “Vom System zur Ordnung. Bemerkungen zu Bewertungen von Sachkatalogen vornehmlich im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert”, *Libri* 37, 1987, nr 2, p. 141; E.I. Šamurin, *Geschichte der bibliothekarisch-bibliographischen Klassifikation*, vol. 2, München-Pullach 1968, pp. 98–99.

<sup>18</sup> A.A.E. Schleiermacher, *Bibliographisches System der gesammten Wissenschaftskunde*, Braunschweig 1852, vol. 1, p. XXXVI; O. Hartwig, *Schema des Realkatalogs der Königlichen*

In the past as well as in the present, there has never been an overall mandatory classification system. This is due to the German opinion that classifications have to grow from the particularities of the book stock of a library instead of being forced on each library uniformly.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, even the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) was adopted by German librarians only reluctantly and comparatively late — in the middle of the 20th century, after several revisions. In the DDC there is no particular category for bibliology. Even though there is a category for the book (*das Buch*), many subjects belonging to bibliology are interspersed throughout the DDC and included in other disciplines such as publishing science or sociology, which reflects the dissipated research areas and interdisciplinary approach of German book studies. In contrast to this, e.g. in the widely-used *Regensburger-Verbundklassifikation* (RVK) developed for the university library in Regensburg in the 1960s, bibliology is still positioned at the top of the classification system under a general category in conjunction with library and information science — very similar to its categorisation in the early modern period.

As bibliology originated from around the humanities studies, today it is particularly well connectable with literary, linguistic and cultural studies.<sup>20</sup> These disciplines are likewise only interested in particular aspects of bibliology — mainly reading and reception studies, also in a historical perspective, the reading process, and the impact of the book on society in general, particularly on communication.<sup>21</sup> Further overlaps exist with disciplines such as economics, which is fruitful in studying the book market, pedagogy in the field of mediation of reading competency or neurobiology, and cognitive science for studying the process of reading.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of book science gaining and seeking to maintain autonomy from other sciences in the course of the 19th and mainly the 20th century, over the past few decades there have been several propositions to integrate the small field of bibliology into a broader discipline. Due to their respective history, the five academic institutions of book science in Germany are already located at different departments. The institute in Mainz is embedded in the history department, whereas

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*Universitätsbibliothek zu Halle a. S.*, Leipzig 1888, pp. 19–21. It is noteworthy that Hartwig calls the superordinated category in his catalogue “*Bücherkunde*”, which translates to the broader term of ‘knowledge of books’.

<sup>19</sup> G. Bee, “Universalklassifikationen in Bibliotheken des deutschen Sprachraums”, [in:] *Klassifikationen in Bibliotheken. Theorie — Anwendung — Nutzen*, eds. H. Alex et al., Berlin-Boston 2018, pp. 26–27; *Einheitsklassifikation: die Geschichte einer fortwirkenden Idee*, Wiesbaden 1994, pp. 19–20; H.A. Krüss, “Germany and the decimal classification”, *Special Libraries* 25, 1934, no 3, passim.

<sup>20</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland...”, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept...”, pp. 10–11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

their colleagues in Munich are connected with German studies, in Münster with English studies, and the two last institutes in Erlangen and Leipzig are located at the department of media science.<sup>23</sup> In the second half of the 20th century, primarily there were suggestions to incorporate bibliology in publishing science, which was developing into communication science. These deliberations were not put into practice though, because at this time publishing science was in the course of establishing itself as and forming itself into an academic discipline, thereby making it impossible to incorporate another related field.<sup>24</sup>

More recently, there have been attempts to pave the way for media studies to integrate book science, even though this field has its own issues with discipline-specific theories. About ten years ago Ulrich Saxer suggested a connection between a bibliological and a sociological communications perspective which builds on Talcott Parson's AGIL-schema. As book science is already engaging in intermedial research questions and is employing methods of the empirical social sciences if they seem promising for its respective purposes, in principle these are good conditions for bringing both disciplines together. In Saxer's opinion, book science should position itself as a research area with a profoundly reflected sociological perspective which conducts its analyses on the micro, meso and meta level in order to do justice to its complex object of investigation. Furthermore, it is of great importance to conceptualise the two central terms of "culture" and "medium" in a connectable and elaborate way. Culture could be understood as a social system mentally structuring the members of a given society by creating role models as an means for orientation. As for medium, a definition proposed by the same author can be used, which is widely accepted in book as well as media studies by today.<sup>25</sup> It defines media as complex institutionalised systems around organised communication channels of a particular functional capacity.<sup>26</sup> Considering that the basics and key concepts contoured by Saxer are at least partly already accepted and used in German book science, this proposition seems to be feasible for both disciplines. It remains to be seen if German bibliology will develop even more in the direction of media studies and adapt to this proposed integration.

<sup>23</sup> T. Keiderling, "Die Institutionen der Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland", [in:] *Cinquante ans du livre de „L'apparition du livre“ (1958) à 2008. Bilan et projets*, ed. F. Barbier, Budapest 2009, p. 222.

<sup>24</sup> U. Rautenberg, "Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland...", pp. 35–36.

<sup>25</sup> U. Saxer, "Buchwissenschaft als Medienwissenschaft", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 1, pp. 68–86.

<sup>26</sup> "Medien sind komplexe institutionalisierte Systeme um organisierte Kommunikationskanäle von spezifischem Leistungsvermögen". U. Saxer, "Der Forschungsgegenstand der Medienwissenschaft", [in:] *Medienwissenschaften. Ein Handbuch zur Entwicklung der Medien und Kommunikationsformen*, eds. J.-F. Leonhard et al., vol. 1, Berlin-New York 1999, p. 6.

### 3. ORGANIZATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF BIBLIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

As already mentioned above, today German bibliology is institutionalised at five academic locations which focus on different areas of research due to their own history and department-wise position in their respective university. It is only since the very end of the 20th century that these institutes were actually named book science and have gained at least partial independence from the institutes they had been affiliated with at the beginning. This development was due to the huge efforts undertaken by the respective chair holders and the — as a consequence — significantly increasing numbers of students. These institutions are complemented by several non-academic organisations engaging in bibliological research questions and maintaining renowned publications.

The oldest professorial chair was initiated at the Johannes-Gutenberg-University in Mainz in 1947 as an endowed chair for Gutenberg research, in particular for bibliology, type and printing (Buch-, Schrift- und Druckwesen). It was first held by Aloys Ruppel, who was renowned for his work on Gutenberg and also became the director of the Gutenberg museum in Mainz in 1950. Naturally, at first the focus was on Gutenberg and incunabula analyses but has been widened to socio-historical and communications science questions under Ruppel's successor Hans Widmann since 1968. From 1992 onwards, Stephan Füssel took over the chair and broadened its research area even more, relying on the model of the French School of Annales and the cultural studies popular in the Anglo-American area. In 2008 a new interdisciplinary focus of studies for media convergence was introduced which analyses the changes brought about by digitisation from the perspectives of e.g. bibliology, publishing science, media management, theatre and film studies.<sup>27</sup>

Similar in its research area, though not in its origin, is the institute at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg. In 1983, a professorial chair for book and library science was established in Erlangen, after this field of study had been introduced successfully as part of the chair for the history of the Middle Ages and historical auxiliary studies ten years before. In the 1990s this study area gained independence and its first professor, Alfred Świerk, was followed by Ursula Rautenberg in 1997. In accordance with its new standing within the university, the thematic scope was widened significantly in the following years particularly to cover bibliological topics both in a historical and contemporary perspective by making use of methods from a variety of other disciplines such as media and social or economic studies. Furthermore, Rautenberg established a vivid partnership

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<sup>27</sup> S. Füssel, "Akademische Buchwissenschaft nach 1947", [in:] *Einführung in die Buchwissenschaft...*, pp. 34–36.

with several institutes of publishing science and German studies in China.<sup>28</sup> Since 2004, there has also been a professorial chair dedicated to e-publishing, making the study of digitisation and its consequences an integral part of the bibliological research in Erlangen.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to the bibliological study programmes in Mainz and Erlangen, the course of studies at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich originated from academic ambitions in the publishing industry, which is still visible today in their comparatively highly pronounced practical orientation. In 1964 an honorary professorship for book and publishing science was introduced within the institute of German philology and filled by Herbert G. Göpfert, who had been working at the Carl-Hanser publishing house in Munich since 1948 as its editor-in-chief. About fifteen years later, in 1987, bibliology was established as a postgraduate course by Göpfert's successor Georg Jäger, who shaped the bibliological research in Munich with his socio-historical perspective.<sup>30</sup> Since 2006 it has been led by Christine Haug, who also recently institutionalised it as a centre for book science — namely bibliology, the publishing industry and digital media, thereby also explicitly including digitisation in the Munich scope of research.<sup>31</sup>

Not the publishing industry, but the aforementioned chair for book retailing management, created in 1925 and first held by Gerhard Menz, was the original background for bibliology at the University in Leipzig. After German reunification, a new chair for book studies was planned, with a focus on media economics, which was set out to be interoperable with mass media approaches of communications and media studies. In 1995 Dietrich Kerlen, who had many years of experience in the publishing industry, became its first professor. A decade later he was succeeded by Siegfried Lokatis, under whose supervision research on the history of the book trade in the DDR was developed into a focus of studies. In contrast to the other four academic institutions for bibliology, in Leipzig there is no independent study programme for book sciences, but bibliology is integrated into broader courses of study on communications and media science, making it inherently interdisciplinary.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Erlanger Buchwissenschaft, *International partnerships*, <https://buchwissenschaft.phil.fau.de/international/international-partnerships/> [retrieved: 25.08.2020].

<sup>29</sup> V. Titel, "Zwischen allen Stühlen? Das universitäre Fach Buchwissenschaft in Erlangen", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 806–808.

<sup>30</sup> C. Haug, F. Mayer, "Die Münchner Buchwissenschaft. Methoden — Modelle — Theorien", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 840–841.

<sup>31</sup> Zentrum für Buchwissenschaft, *Vita Christina Haug*, <https://www.zfb.uni-muenchen.de/personen/professoren/haug/vita/index.html> [retrieved: 25.08.2020].

<sup>32</sup> T. Keiderling, S. Lokatis, "Buchwissenschaft als Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft. Zur Geschichte, Ausprägung und Zukunft des Leipziger Modells", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 820–825.



Last but not least, bibliology is institutionalised at the Westfalia Wilhelms-University in Münster. In the 1950s a research institute for book studies and bibliography/Institutum Erasmianum was established by the romanist Heinrich Lausberg. At first, the focus was on the Middle Ages and manuscripts as well as palaeography. About a decade later, the institute was affiliated with local English studies and in the following years shaped deeply by the research of the Anglicist Bernhard Fabian. The research area was widened accordingly, namely to book history, analytical bibliography, library science, and editions. In 1998, Gabriele Müller-Oberhäuser took over the professorial chair and integrated bibliology, now with a focus on English book history, into the study programme of the English department. In 2020 she was followed by Corinna Norrick-Rühl. The international perspective of this institute is brought about not only by the intricate connection with English studies, but also by a close partnership with the Master of Arts Book and Digital Media Studies at the University of Leiden.<sup>33</sup>

All things considered, academic bibliology in Germany incorporates a broad spectrum of research between theory and practice due to its different genesis at the five universities. The total number of institutes and thereby also of professorial chairs and students though is quite low in comparison with other university subjects, which impairs its research capacity.<sup>34</sup> However, there are several more organisations dedicated to bibliology, out of which the historical commission of the association of the German book trade, the Wolfenbüttel Research Group for Library, Book and Media History, the International Gutenberg Society, and the International Society for Book Studies are presented in the following paragraphs.<sup>35</sup>

The historical commission of the association of the German book trade (Historische Kommission des Börsenvereins des deutschen Buchhandels), which stemmed from several publishers' interest in the book trade history, is the oldest organisation for bibliology in Germany. Since 1875 it has encouraged its members, mainly scholars, librarians, book traders and antiquaries, to engage in book-related research activities. While it doesn't conduct any research of its own, it has initiated several huge projects, such as the history of the German book trade around 1900 — an extensive publication on the book trade from its invention until present day by Friedrich Kapp and Johann Goldfriedrich. Moreover, since 1958 it has been

<sup>33</sup> Chair of Book Studies, Münster, <https://www.uni-muenster.de/Anglistik/bookstudies/> [retrieved: 25.08.2020]; S. Füssel, "Akademische Buchwissenschaft...", p. 36; G. Müller-Oberhäuser, "Buchwissenschaft in Münster", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft und Buchwirkungsforschung. VIII. Leipziger Hochschultage für Medien und Kommunikation*, eds. D. Kerlen, I. Kiste, Leipzig 2000, pp. 57–59.

<sup>34</sup> U. Rautenberg, "Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Einführung und kritische Auseinandersetzung", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 1, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> For more organisations relevant to bibliology, see the table in T. Keiderling, "Die Institutionen der Buchwissenschaft...", pp. 227–234.

publishing the Archive for the History of Bibliology (Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens), which mainly covered librarian and bibliographical topics until the end of the 1980s, and then widened its thematic scope to literary sociological and socio-historical research.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, the Wolfenbüttel Research Group for Library, Book and Media History (Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreis für Bibliotheks-, Buch- und Mediengeschichte) is a platform for researchers, financed and organised by the Duke August Library in Wolfenbüttel, one of the very few German research libraries. It grew out of two research groups — one for book history, founded in 1975, the other for library history, established four years later — which were conjoined in 1998 due to a thematic overlap and economic reasons. The research group discusses current research projects, organises workshops and conferences, and also serves the Duke August Library as an expert group giving advice concerning the library's scholarly activities.<sup>37</sup>

The International Gutenberg Society (Internationale Gutenberg-Gesellschaft) in Mainz aims to support research in printing and bibliography. After the idea for this association was brought up by Karl Dziatzko, a professor in Göttingen, in the course of the festivities celebrating the five-hundredth anniversary of Gutenberg's invention, the society was founded one year later in 1901, when the Gutenberg museum was opened. It encourages research on all aspects of bibliography, ranging from traditional questions, e.g. concerning incunabula or the history of printing techniques, to more modern studies, e.g. the publishing economy or the impact of digitisation. Apart from research, there is a particular focus on sustaining the Gutenberg museum in Mainz. Furthermore, the society publishes the Gutenberg Yearbook and every two years awards the Gutenberg Prize for extraordinary accomplishments in the field of printing, together with the city of Mainz.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the International Society for Book Studies (Internationale Buchwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft) is another platform for scholarly discussions and exchange of bibliological topics. It was only founded in 1999 and has changed its name several times in order to better express its international aspirations. It (financially) supports its members research concerning all aspects of the book as a material object in the media system, e.g. its production, distribution, reception or impact on society. Being a German organisation, it concentrates on German and

<sup>36</sup> M. Estermann, "Die Historische Kommission...", pp. 758–761, 763–765.

<sup>37</sup> P. Vodosek, "Der Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreis für Bibliotheks-, Buch- und Mediengeschichte", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 776–781, 787–790.

<sup>38</sup> S. Füssel, "Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaften: American Antiquarian Society, Historische Kommission des Börsenvereins, Gutenberg-Gesellschaft", [in:] *Einführung in die Buchwissenschaft...*, pp. 32–34; Internationale Gutenberg Gesellschaft, <https://www.gutenberg-gesellschaft.de/> [retrieved: 9.11.2020].

Central European bibliography, but also conducts research on other countries after the Second World War. Since many different disciplines are represented in the society, the approaches used for these research questions range from bibliological, historical, sociological and economic to technical inquiries.<sup>39</sup>

Altogether, these non-academic organisations form an integral part of bibliological research in Germany, as they financially and organisationally support researchers and practitioners from different disciplinary backgrounds in their studies, in communication with each other, and maintain renowned bibliological publications.

#### 4. RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As has been mentioned, there is no overall bibliological theory which could be used for structuring particular research projects or even research directions. Implicitly, academic bibliography is oriented on the model of production, distribution and reception of the book, e.g. as illustrated by Robert Darnton, and thereby follows the examples of research in other countries like France, Great Britain or America.<sup>40</sup> Over time, several branches of bibliological research have evolved and gained prominence in Germany. They can also be divided into different time phases, which in turn can reflect the historical development of German book science from and within other disciplines.

At first, the focus of research was history of the book, book trade and printing, with a particular interest in the invention of letterpress printing by Johannes Gutenberg — its technical aspects as well as Gutenberg's biography. From around 1970 onwards, literary studies introduced a sociological perspective and initiated research on the reading and reception of books both in a historic and a contemporary dimension. In the following decade, the physical manifestation of texts as books and their material aspects moved into the foreground, whereas in the 1990s, with the new connection to communication and media studies, the book was mainly analysed as a medium.<sup>41</sup>

It has to be acknowledged that German bibliology and particularly research in book history tends to focus on materiality. On the one hand, this encompasses all technical aspects of book production in printing houses such as printing tech-

<sup>39</sup> W. Schmitz, "Die Internationale Buchwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft", [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 2, pp. 793–795.

<sup>40</sup> U. Rautenberg, "Buchwissenschaft als Wissenschaft...", p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> U. Rautenberg, "Ein halbes Jahrhundert deutscher Buchforschung: die wichtigsten Entwicklungen im Überblick", [in:] *Cinquante ans d'histoire du livre. De l'apparition du livre (1958) à 2008. Bilan et projets*, eds. F. Barbier, I. Monok, Budapest 2009, p. 41.

niques, printing letters, print material, including paper and parchment, as well as the history of printing houses. On the other hand, it also means cataloguing all remnants of this production in detail, which can then be used as a starting point for further research.<sup>42</sup> In the long term, the whole book production will be recorded in a retrospective national bibliography for each century. Incunabula are collected in the Union Catalogue of Incunabula (Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke),<sup>43</sup> whereas the book production from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries is collected in respective Union Catalogues of Books Printed in German Speaking Countries (Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke).<sup>44</sup> While the catalogues up until the 17th century are about to be completed, much work still needs to be done for the 18th century, as well as the 19th century, whose bibliography still remains a desideratum. The early modern books are not only catalogued, but also image digitised, and thereby made more easily accessible to researchers. There are plans to also make their full text available, which will allow new research questions and approaches.<sup>45</sup> Concerning the distribution of books, studies have focused on the sales strategies and corporate histories from the 18th century onwards. This is mainly due to a lack of primary sources for the time before 1700, many of which were handwritten materials and have not been preserved in archives till the present day.<sup>46</sup>

For those historic hermeneutical studies, a variety of methods is used from e.g. analytical bibliography or qualitative, less often also quantitative approaches to book production.<sup>47</sup> With new technological possibilities from natural sciences, such as radiography or infrared imaging, the traditional historic hermeneutic ap-

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke, <https://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/GWEN.xhtml> [retrieved: 26.08.2020].

<sup>44</sup> BSB München, *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts (VD 16)*, <https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/sammlungen/historische-drucke/recherche/vd-16/>; VD 17, <http://www.vd17.de/en/home>; VD 18, <http://www.vd18.de/> [all retrieved: 26.08.2020].

<sup>45</sup> E. Engl et al., “Volltexte für die Frühe Neuzeit. Der Beitrag des OCR-D-Projekts zur Volltexterkennung frühneuzeitlicher Drucke”, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 48, 2020, no 2, pp. 224–226. The DFG-funded initiative OCR-D is currently working on the further development of optical character recognition with a focus on early modern German books. It is preparing the full text transformation of the Union Catalogues both technically and conceptionally. OCR-D, *The OCR-D project*, <https://ocr-d.de/en/about> [retrieved: 26.08.2020].

<sup>46</sup> O. Duntze, “Verlagsbuchhandel und verbreitender Buchhandel von der Erfindung des Buchdrucks bis 1700”, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 1, pp. 204–205; M. Estermann, “Buchhandel, Buchhandelsgeschichte und Verlagsgeschichtsschreibung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. Ein Überblick über Quellenlage und Forschungsliteratur”, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch...*, vol. 1, p. 258.

<sup>47</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft als Wissenschaft...”, p. 43.

proaches of this research direction are complemented by illuminating novel insights into the sources of early printing.<sup>48</sup>

The reception of books is studied under a particularly broad variety of perspectives. Subsequent to the studies on the materiality of books, their layout and the reading modes implied by it are analysed qualitatively, following the example of French bibliology.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the social history of reading concerns the circumstances and modes of different readers and reading groups as well as their literary preferences, whereas communication studies focus on the effects of the reception of books.<sup>50</sup>

With the book being both a cultural and an economic good, there is also research investigating the publishing industry and its legal framework. With the methods of media economics, the whole circle of the production, distribution and reception of the book is studied. The analyses can focus on the publishing industry itself from a macro perspective or be conducted at the micro level from single companies' point of view.<sup>51</sup>

As described above, German bibliology makes use of methods and approaches from many different disciplines, which suit the particular needs of a research question. Moreover, it closely follows relevant studies from other disciplines, which allows it to act as an integrating research field, bringing together a huge variety of perspectives on its central research object — the book.

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<sup>48</sup> T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept...”, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> U. Rautenberg, “Ein halbes Jahrhundert deutscher Buchforschung...”, p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> T. Keiderling, “Buchwissenschaft als Konzept...”, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> A. Vogel, “Medienökonomie und Verlagswirtschaft”, [in:] *Einführung in die Buchwissenschaft...*, pp. 99–108.

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## BIBLIOLOGY IN GERMANY — ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENTS AND CURRENT STATE

### Summary

From its origins in the early modern period up until today, German bibliology has undergone a huge transformation both in terms of its relationship to other subjects and its research areas. The article describes the development of bibliology in Germany from its beginnings in bibliographic

and librarian contexts, over its evolvement as a field of study in its own rights in the late 18th century, until its current situation as a university subject. Today, German book science is a relatively small discipline which might profit from integration in broader media studies already proposed a decade ago. It has links to many other humanities subjects, especially librarian, literary, linguistic and cultural studies, and sees its task in integrating interdisciplinary research on the book instead of monopolising it. Due to the lack of an overall book theory or model, this also means making use of the research approaches of these adjoining disciplines whenever they seem promising. The bibliological studies on all aspects of books, implicitly oriented on the steps of production, distribution and reception of books and conducted by the few professorial chairs of book science, are complemented by several non-university institutions and research groups.

KEY WORDS: Germany, bibliography, historical development, research areas