Sylvia Brockstieger & Paul Schweitzer-Martin

Between Manuscript and Print—Introduction

Libraries and research institutions around the world hold countless manuscripts and early printed books.[1] Some of the most prestigious and beautiful reading rooms are dedicated to these rare materials. Even smaller institutions often have their own division and sometimes a separate reading room or area for these holdings. While these smaller institutions often only have one reading room for their special collections, large institutions, such as the British Library in London, the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, or the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz have multiple reading rooms, among them a rare books reading room and a manuscript reading room. The precise names of these reading rooms vary slightly. However, the division roughly runs between a room for manuscripts and one for printed materials, which is indicated by their respective names. In practice this separation is not so clear cut. While for instance at the Library of Congress incunables have to be studied at the rare books reading room (Rare Book & Special Collections, LJ 239), in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin they are to be found in the manuscript reading room (*Handschriftenlesesaal*). This example shows that a variety of factors can be taken into account when classifying rare books: Their materiality and production date, however, are two of the most common.

A book's date and method of production not only are reflected in reading rooms but also in call numbers. No matter the institution's size, almost all libraries rely on different call number systems for manuscripts and printed books. Often, they contain a significant amount of information about a book. They differentiate, for example, between the language of a text, indicate if a printed text is an incunable or was produced after 1500, and sometimes even reveal previous owners. However, again, a common division in call numbers can be found between manuscript and printed artifacts.

Over the centuries, libraries have established individual reference systems suitable for their collections and storage facilities. Some books, however, are disruptive for this system. One example is *Sammelbände* that contain both manuscripts and printed materials. In earlier centuries, libraries would separate these materials and shelve them 'appropriately' as manuscript or print. This obviously was not possible for mixed

---

1 See Pettegree/Der Weduwen 2021 on the history and development of libraries.

---

materials, such as printed books with individual manuscript pages. An example for this case is the so-called *Stammbücher* (*alba amicorum*): At Heidelberg University's library, some are categorized as 'manuscripts' and subsequently filed under the owner's name, while others are cataloged under the printed book which forms the printed 'base' for the handwritten *album amicorum*.

This 'great divide' between manuscript and print culture is not only visible in the shelfing and cataloguing systems of most libraries,[2] but also deeply engraved in the collective memory of the western world. It is only in recent scholarship that the transition from a predominant 'culture of handwriting' to a predominant 'culture of print' in the early modern period has not been described in terms of a teleological process but rather as a complex event in cultural history which is characterized by various forms of transitions, simultaneities, and of shifting meanings.[3] The emphasis and unique approach of this volume is to provide a cross-cultural, comparative view on said processes in the late medieval and early modern periods, combining research on Christian and Jewish European book culture with findings on East Asian manuscript and print culture. This approach highlights interactions and interdependencies between manuscript and print culture instead of retracing a linear process from the manuscript book to its printed successor or by searching for the invention of printing.[4]

Traditional contributions from the fields of book history, medieval and early modern history, and art history have shown, for example, under which factors—such as changed production and market conditions and the influence of new technologies—European book culture developed from one being dominated by handwriting and manuscripts to one being dominated by typography.[5] However, a more global perspective underscores the finding that manuscript culture did not disappear, but rather, in central Europe as well as in Iceland or Japan, prevailed throughout the early modern period.[6] Furthermore, contributions from literary studies have long examined how the potentials of the new medium 'printed book' affected the question of which languages were chosen for specific types of literary production, and how literature as such also changed its thematic and aesthetic face under the auspices of the specific early modern epistemic and media layout.[7] A more 'traditional' research question in

---

2 Cf. Gantert 2019 for collections of manuscripts, incunables, and early printed books in libraries. According to McKitterick 2018, 47 this practice goes back to the 17th century.

3 Cf. Dover 2021, 24–25. This also reflects in current discussions. Some examples for recent conferences discussing these questions are: History of the Book Conference: "Print and Manuscript" (St. Andrews, July 2022); "Handwriting in Print. Commenting, Correcting, Rewriting, 1500–1800" (Heidelberg, September 2021); "Manuscript after Print" (Vienna, April 2017).

4 Part of the following reflections can also be found in Brockstieger/Hirt 2023b.

5 Cf. for instance Hellinga/Härtel 1981; Müller 1988; Steinmann 1995; Neddermeyer 1998; Schanze 1999; Braun 2006; Buringh/Zanden 2009; Giesecke 1991; Eisenstein 2005; Needham 2015; Schmitz 2018, 11–41; Dover 2021, 18.

6 Cf. Kornicki 2019, 272–284; Glauser 2021, 1–28.

7 Cf. Nafde 2020, 120–144; Rautenberg 2021; Hegel/Krewet 2022.

this context would be, for example, how texts were transferred from manuscript into print and what changes they underwent during that process, or how they were aimed at different readerships depending on their material composition. These types of cases have been studied extensively.[8] More recently, scholars have asked what actors were involved and how they interacted with and through their artifacts: Research in literary studies and book history in particular has attempted to write the history of early modern literature and media microhistorically from the perspective of individual printers and their regional and social embeddings in order to demonstrate the crucial role printers and publishers played in the programmatic readjustment of the book market—often between 'manuscript and print'—and also of literature as such.[9]

Another newer research question, which looks beyond the borders of the printing press as an institution, is which transformations handwriting as a cultural technique underwent under the conditions of the printing age, how it changed its functions (e. g., individualization, adapting the aura of authority and ephemerality at the same time), and which new forms of interaction between the handwritten and the printed text emerged—and how these interferences can be productively described from a comparative cultural perspective in order to fully understand the epistemic and material processes involved.[10]

Texts written by hand in the printing age are hierarchized differently than before. For the most part, handwritten texts now become not completed codices, but working instruments, also in the sense of scholarly activity: Scholarly techniques of annotating and excerpting, for example, played an important role in academic circles and didactic contexts from the middle ages throughout the early modern period.[11] The fact that printed books in the early modern period were to a large extent designed to be worked with[12] is also evidenced by the fashion of having purchased books inserted with blank pages by the bookbinder, which invited annotation or further writing.[13] In general, manuscripts in the age of print often have more of a provisional status, especially when they are prepared for the book market, and are sometimes 'only' intermediate stages on the way to the finished, printed book, which in this perspective appears as a static end product of a dynamic process, in which forms of collective authorship (in the medium of handwritten interventions) could also come into play.[14] Even though the impression prevailed for a long time that handwritten products had fallen

---

8 Cf. for instance Braun 2006.

9 Cf. for instance Brockstieger 2018; Limbach 2021; Schweitzer-Martin 2022.

10 Cf. Augustyn 2003; Mentzel-Reuters 2013; Kornicki 2019; Dover 2021; Brockstieger/Hirt 2023a. For material preconditions see Bellingradt/Reynolds 2021.

11 See, for instance, for the 18th century Décultot 2014 and for the early modern period in general Décultot/Zedelmaier 2017.

12 Cf. the case studies in Brockstieger/Hirt 2023a.

13 Cf. Brendecke 2005; Feuerstein-Herz 2017; Feuerstein-Herz 2019.

14 Cf. Ehrmann 2022; Pabst/Penke 2022.

far behind printed texts in terms of quantity with the advent of the printing age,[15] this is also due to the fact that handwritten preparatory work was often destroyed at the time: A new kind of 'bequest consciousness' ("Nachlassbewusstein"[16]) about the preservation value of one's own or other people's handwritten documents and the sense of the manuscript as a medium of unique artistry only emerged in the 18th century and then went hand in hand with new concepts of authorship, individuality, and distinctiveness. Then, not only the large codex-shaped manuscript, but also the small handwritten product, i. e., the handwritten signature, were not only legal authority (as they already were in the middle ages), but also were ascribed a market value, for example in the autograph trade.[17] Handwritten daily communication, for example in the form of letters or little notes, acquired its own cultural significance and became the bearer of a new sort of 'emotional culture', which was also reflected as such in a new literary genre, the epistolary novel. In this context, a handwritten artifact, especially written by an important author, could take on a static, auratic character.

However, these are processes that only really emerge in the century of the Enlightenment, but which, in a certain sense, are based on the manifold dynamics between handwriting and print from the 15th to the 17th century. In this context, the many forms of the coexistence and interdependence of handwriting and print have been noted again and again, but have not yet been comprehensively researched, especially not in a transcultural perspective. The questions outlined above are of ongoing importance and inspire new research, especially in light of newer conceptualizations of 'text', 'writing', and 'materiality', which specifically characterize the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) "Material Text Cultures" in Heidelberg and which have led us to approach these questions again from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective.[18]

While each chapter is written as a disciplinary study focused on one specific case from the respective field, the volume as a whole allows for transcultural perspectives. Following this scheme, the volume obviously cannot study the field of interactions and transition(s) between manuscript and print or the scholarly questions outlined above comprehensively or systematically. However, it aims to highlight the importance of this field and to broaden its scope to foster further scholarship. The case studies' variety in regard to their cultural and regional settings between about the 15th and 18th century is key to this cause. Some of them, e. g., **Radu Leca's** chapter, therefore also focus on the artifacts' reception history beyond the premodern era and thereby provide further prospects of the topic. Quite a number of overarching questions and aspects regarding the interrelationship of manuscript and print are touched upon by

---

15 Cf. for instance Brandis 1997, 55.

16 Cf. Sina/Spoerhase 2013; Sina/Spoerhase 2017; Benne 2015.

17 Cf. The Multigraph Collective 2018, 195.

18 Cf. Meier/Ott/Sauer 2015 for these concepts. Also see the preface of this volume for more information regarding the CRC.

the volume's chapters. We want to point out only four of these phenomena that connect the case studies:

First, texts are commonly characterized as handwritten or printed. However, books are not necessarily perceived and designed along these common distinctions. This volume highlights, e. g., in the chapters by **Joana van de Löcht, Uwe M. Korn, Silvia Hufnagel,** and **Sasaki Takahiro,** that certain manuscript and print features are purposely used for the other medium. Thus, this is clearly a cross-cultural phenomenon. Likewise, across cultural boundaries, books are more than just the (re)production of text. Many other features from the writing surface (mostly paper and parchment) to the binding primarily define these artifacts. **Pia Eckart's** chapter especially underscores the importance of the arrangement of texts within a binding. Overall, the difference between actually writing and producing a book is of great importance.

Second, this is followed by the question of the form of handwriting in the age of print. There is a difference between writing in a composed manner and thereby working towards a fixed text — i. e., when handwriting is used in an artistic form — and whether handwriting is used as a complementary technique or to dynamize printing *(ars manu scribendi* vs. *ars artificialiter scribendi).* This is how we can differentiate the term 'handwriting' — which comprises anything from one hand-written character to large amounts of text — from the term 'manuscript' — which implies a body of text. Both forms of handwritten text are evaluated differently and play different roles in various cultural and textual settings, as, for example, **Joana van de Löcht's** chapter shows for German letters of the early modern period and as **Sasaki Takahiro** elucidates for early printing in Japan. Both highlight features of printed and manuscript texts in the respective other medium.

Third, books are valuable and are attributed with value for numerous reasons. Depending on the cultural setting, the age of a book, or its genre, different concepts of value are ascribed to manuscript books and printed books. Furthermore, language, the intended recipients, and availability have to be considered. Studying collections and their history can help us understand how the value of books and printed artifacts was conceived and how it changed over time, as is described by **Ilona Steimann, Radu Leca,** and **Pia Eckhart. Carla Meyer-Schlenkrich's** and **Paul Schweitzer-Martin's** joint chapter shows how a book's value changed over time when the content was viewed from new perspectives. Distinguishing between public and private collections, for example, and the context of use can help understand which audience the artifact was aimed at and how it was perceived over time.

Lastly, several chapters touch upon the question of usability and affordance. How do manuscript and print facilitate the usability of a text and which advantages do the respective media have? **Carla Meyer-Schlenkrich** and **Paul Schweitzer-Martin** point out how within a few decades layout and design changed, leading to adaptations and copying in manuscripts as highlighted above. **Sasaki Takahiro** elaborates on the development of early printing in Japan and interactions between Japanese and European techniques and layout features. These examples show that the aspect of

layout features and affordance is of special interest for the comparative study of European, both Jewish and Christian, and Japanese books.

These four aspects connect the individual studies and give a first glimpse of the following chapters: Each of them investigates a specific artifact, a phenomenon or field of printing history from a different field of research and scholarship. Despite the diversity and the broad scope, the chapters highlight the complexity of the relationship of manuscript and print in different regions and cultures between the 15th and 18th century and as a whole provide a transcultural perspective on an important phenomenon of the period.

Bibliography

Augustyn, Wolfgang (2003), "Zur Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck in Deutschland – Versuch einer Skizze aus kunsthistorischer Sicht", in: Gerd Dicke and Klaus Grubmüller (eds.), *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck* (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 16), Wiesbaden, 5–47.

Bellingradt, Daniel/Reynolds, Anna (eds.) (2021), *The Paper Trade in Early Modern Europe. Practices, Materials, Networks* (Library of the Written Word 89/The Handpress World 70), Leiden/Boston.

Benne, Christian (2015), *Die Erfindung des Manuskripts. Zu Theorie und Geschichte literarischer Gegenständlichkeit*, Berlin.

Brandis, Tilo (1997), "Die Handschrift zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Versuch einer Typologie", in: *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 72, 27–57.

Braun, Hans E. (2006), "Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch", in: Michael Stolz and Adrian Mettauer (eds.), *Buchkultur im Mittelalter. Schrift – Bild – Kommunikation*, Berlin/New York, 215–242.

Brendecke, Arndt (2005), "Durchschossene Exemplare. Über eine Schnittstelle zwischen Handschrift und Druck", in: *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 59, 50–64.

Brockstieger, Sylvia (2018), *Sprachpatriotismus und Wettstreit der Künste. Johann Fischart im Kontext der Offizin Bernhard Jobin*, Berlin/Boston.

Brockstieger, Sylvia/Hirt, Rebecca (eds.) (2023a), *Handschrift im Druck (ca. 1500–1800). Annotieren, Korrigieren, Weiterschreiben* (Materiale Textkulturen 39), Berlin/Boston.

Brockstieger, Sylvia/Hirt, Rebecca (2023b), "Handschrift im Druck (ca. 1600 bis 1800). Probleme und Perspektiven", in: Sylvia Brockstieger and Rebecca Hirt (eds.), *Handschrift im Druck (ca. 1500–1800). Annotieren, Korrigieren, Weiterschreiben* (Materiale Textkulturen 39), Berlin/Boston, 9–13.

Buringh, Eltjo/Zanden, Jan Luiten van (2009), "Charting the 'Rise of the West': Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, A Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries", in: *The Journal of Economic History* 69 (2), 409–445.

Décultot, Elisabeth (ed.) (2014), *Lesen, Kopieren, Schreiben. Lese- und Exzerpierkunst in der europäischen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin.

Décultot, Elisabeth/Zedelmaier, Helmut (eds.) (2017), *Exzerpt, Plagiat, Archiv. Untersuchungen zur neuzeitlichen Schriftkultur*, Halle an der Saale.

Dover, Paul M. (2021), *The Information Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New Approaches to European History), Cambridge.

Ehrmann, Daniel (2022), *Kollektivität. Geteilte Autorschaft und kollaborative Praxisformen 1770–1840* (Literaturgeschichte in Studien und Quellen 34), Köln.

Eisenstein, Elisabeth (2005), *The printing revolution in Ealy Modern Europe*, Cambridge et al.

Feuerstein-Herz, Petra (2017), "Weiße Seiten. Durchschossene Bücher in alten Bibliotheken", in: *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 11 (4), 101–114.

Feuerstein-Herz, Petra (2019), "Seitenwechsel. Handschrift und Druck in durchschossenen Buchexemplaren der frühen Neuzeit", in: Christian Benne and Carlos Spoerhase (eds.), *Materialität: Von Blättern und Seiten* (Kodex. Jahrbuch der Internationalen Buchwissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft 9), Wiesbaden, 9–26.

Gantert, Klaus (2019), *Handschriften, Inkunabeln, Alte Drucke. Informationsressourcen zu historischen Bibliotheksbeständen* (Bibliotheks- und Informationspraxis 60), Berlin/Boston.

Giesecke, Michael (1991), *Der Buchdruck in der frühen Neuzeit. Eine historische Fallstudie über die Durchsetzung neuer Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien*, Frankfurt a. M..

Glauser, Jörg (2021), "The Simultaneity of Media. Manuscripts and Printed Books in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe", in: Matthew James Driscoll and Nicolás Mac Cathmhaoil (eds.), *Hidden Harmonies. Manuscript and print on the North Atlantic fringe, 1500–1900* (Bibliotheca Arnamagnaeana 54), Copenhagen, 1–28.

Hegel, Philipp/Krewet, Michael (eds.) (2022), *Wissen und Buchgestalt* (Episteme 26), Wiesbaden.

Hellinga, Lotte/Helmar Härtel (eds.) (1981), *Buch und Text im 15. Jahrhundert. Arbeitsgespräch in der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*, Hamburg, 27–34.

Kornicki, Peter (2019), "Japan's hand-written culture: confessions of a print addict", in: *Japan Forum* 31 (2), 272–284.

Limbach, Saskia (2021), *Government Use of Print. Official Publications in the Holy Roman Empire, 1500–1600* (Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Rechtsgeschichte und Rechtstheorie Frankfurt a. M. 326), Frankfurt a. M..

McKitterick, David (2018), *The Invention of Rare Books. Private Interest and Public Memory, 1600–1840*, Cambridge.

Meier, Thomas/Ott, Michael R./Sauer, Rebecca (eds.) (2015), *Materiale Textkulturen. Konzepte – Materialien – Praktiken* (Materiale Textkulturen 1), Berlin/Boston/München.

Mentzel-Reuters, Arno (2013), "Das Nebeneinander von Handschrift und Buchdruck im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in: Ursula Rautenberg (ed.), *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*, Berlin/Boston, 411–442.

Müller, Jan-Dirk (1998): "Der Körper des Buchs. Zum Medienwechsel zwischen Handschrift und Druck", in: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (eds.), *Materialität der Kommunikation*, Frankfurt, 203–217.

Nafde, Aditi (2020), "Replicating the Mechanical Print Aesthetic in Manuscripts before circa 1500", in: *Digital Philology* 9 (2), 120–144.

Neddermeyer, Uwe (1998), *Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch. Schriftlichkeit und Leseinteresse im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit. Quantitative und qualitative Aspekte,* vol. 1: *Text* (Buchwissenschaftliche Beiträge aus dem Deutschen Bucharchiv München 61/1), Wiesbaden.

Needham, Paul (2015), "Book Production on Paper and Vellum in the fourteenth and fifteenth Centuries", in: Carla Meyer, Sandra Schultz and Bernd Schneidmüller (eds.), *Papier im mittelalterlichen Europa. Herstellung und Gebrauch* (Materiale Textkulturen 7), Berlin/Boston, 247–274.

Pabst, Stephan/Penke, Niels (2022), "Kollektive Autorschaft", in: Michael Wetzel (ed.), *Grundthemen der Literaturwissenschaft: Autorschaft*, Berlin et al., 411–428.

Pettegree, Andrew/der Weduwen, Arthur (2021), *The Library. A Fragile History*, London.

Rautenberg, Ursula (2021), "'Last Words on the History of the Title Page'. Research on the Origin and Development of the Title Page from Alfred W. Pollard to Today", in: Edoardo Barbieri (ed.), *IMAGO LIBRORUM. Mille anni di forme del libro in Europa. Atti del convegno di Rovereto-Trento 24–26 maggio 2017* (Biblioteca di Bibliografia. Documents and Studies in Book and Library History CCXV), Florence, 207–224.

Schanze, Frieder (1999), "Der Buchdruck eine Medienrevolution?", in: Walter Haug (ed.), *Mittelalter und frühe Neuzeit. Übergänge, Umbrüche und Neuansätze*, Tübingen, 286–311.

Schmitz, Wolfgang (2018), *Grundriss der Inkunabelkunde. Das gedruckte Buch im Zeitalter des Medienwechsels* (Bibliothek des Buchwesens 27), Stuttgart.

Schnell, Rüdiger (2007), "Handschrift und Druck. Zur funktionalen Differenzierung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 32 (1), 66–111.

Schweitzer-Martin, Paul (2022), *Kooperation und Innovation im Speyerer Buchdruck des ausgehenden Mittelalters* (Materiale Textkulturen 37), Berlin/Boston.

Sina, Kai/Spoerhase, Carlos (2013), "Nachlassbewusstsein. Zur literaturwissenschaftlichen Erforschung seiner Entstehung und Entwicklung", in: *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 23 (3), 607–623.

Sina, Kai/Spoerhase, Carlos (eds.) (2017), *Nachlassbewusstsein. Literatur, Archiv, Philologie* (Marbacher Schriften. N. F. 13), Göttingen.

Steinmann, Martin (1995), "Von der Handschrift zur Druckschrift der Renaissance", in: Barbara Tiemann (ed.), *Die Buchkultur im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 203–264.

The Multigraph Collective (2018), *Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation*, Chicago.