

Cataloguing Overview

[fine.books \(748 \)](#)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 1:47 AM

In a recent thread, ctbooks wrote:

Would someone please add a thread on cataloging books?"

Here then, from the perspective of an amateur of long standing, is the beginning of a thread on the general cataloguing and description of books.

Please note that there are no hard and fast rules beyond the basic structure. European descriptions tend toward adhering more closely to the old school Standard Format; American descriptions tend to take a somewhat more modernish approach, even placing the publisher's imprint before the Place, after the Date.

1.) Heading

The subject, if and where applicable, preceding the author's name, for example, in a literary criticism text on Joyce:

[James Joyce]

or on a text which relates directly to a subject not implied in the title:

[American Civil War]

or for various genres:

[Postclassical Manuscripts]:

or books of a particular Press:

[Golden Compass: Plantin Press]:

2.) Author

Full name, where known, according to the imprint. Names supplied from initials in the imprint are inserted, in brackets; birth and death dates in parentheses, or, where approximate, given the designation "fl." or, " "floruit" Classical authors are noted by their accepted truncations first, with full names supplied in brackets.

Smith, John E[ntwhistle]. (1855 - 1922):

Celsus [A. Cornelius Celsus putatur Tiberio] (floruit 30 A.D.):

By The Author Of Other Roads [Smith, John E[ntwhistle]. (1855 - 1922):

If, however, the author's name appears in full elsewhere in the book, as in a signature to the preface, the colophon, copyright, and cetera, the format should be:

By The Author Of Other Roads (Smith, John Entwistle (1855 - 1922):

to note that the author's name is not from a secondary bibliographical source, but directly from the catalogued title.

3.) Illustrators, translators, editors, commentators, rubricators, engravers, and cetera.

The elder practise of utilising parentheses, brackets and braces to distinguish between stated and unstated illustrators, where plates are engraved by one artist, after the design of another, have seemingly perished, owing to the confusion they wrought. Let them so remain. The bracket serves well in all cases, and leaves a clean layout line. It also allows for secondary insertions, by "freeing up" the parenthesis for internal notation.

[Edited by John Smith, Ph.D (1912 -)];

[Illustrated by John Jones (1806 - 1899); frontispiece by Ralph Johnson (1804 - 1877), after a design by {William Henry} Wooton (1788 - 1839)];

[Illustrated by Erhard Ratdolt (1447 - 1527)] [rubrics supplied by a contemporary hand - atelier unknown - after the Lombardy School] [with commentaries by Michael Tramezzino];

4.) Title.

The title is transcribed as it appears on the title page, or, if the book was printed without title page, in the colophon. Books printed without either title page or colophon are titled as drop-head titles (like pamphlets without separate title pages) where no bibliographical title has been assigned, or as parenthetical titles where designated. The old-school use of, "incipit," or, "incipiunt," as a precursor to preliminary titles in printed books is yet another rule to have fallen by the wayside, though it remains in use by cataloguers of manuscripts.

Catch-22;

The Peculiar Life and Untimely Death of William Entwistle of Firth, and the Times Surrounding Him, with a Bibliographical Note by the Right Reverend Horace Chapin, and with Observations and an Appendix by Chester, Least Earl of Leichester, the Jester;

(Mariale [Opus Virginiis Glorii]);

(Incipi[iun]t Constitü[tiones] [de] Pö[pe] I°[hannes] IX)

Where titles are in a language with a character set other than that of the cataloguer, either the 'presence' rule or the title as such is given; either:

[Greek Title]

or

Makedonikes Poleis kai Oikogeneies

5.) Date.

Where the date is printed on the title page or in the colophon, it is given in its entirety:

1950;

or

12 January, 1477;

where the date is unstated, but known by bibliographical reference, and accepted, it is shown in brackets:

[1912];

Where the date is unknown, the book is given the annotation N.D. or, "No Date." In books whose bibliographical sources have assigned dates by samples of type, rubrication, inscriptions, watermarks, and cetera, those dates should be given in brackets:

[not before 1466]

[not after 13 May, 1460]

Modern books exhibit the peculiarity of showing copyright dates (which should be given in parentheses):

(© 1950);

but should never be considered the printing date. Printing dates on Modern books are shown on the recto of the title page.

6.) Place.

The place where a book was published, if stated, or if known. "Place," conforms generally to the rules for Date.

New York;

or, if known as a bibliographical reference:

[Augsburg]

when no place of publication is known, the designation N.P. is assigned. Bibliographical presumption is likewise noted, where known, but the reference should be given, wherever possible:

No Place (probably Mainz: see Hain: 1208);

Place names should be translated where originally Latinised, or where the language of the cataloguer differs

with them:

København [i.e. Copenhagen];

Lugduni Bataurum [i.e. Leiden];

7.) Imprint.

Taken from the publisher's Imprint itself in Modern books (on the recto of the title page) (unless a separate printer is indicated on the copyright page, verso of the title leaf), from the colophon in Early books, from the Printer's Device, watermark or from confirmed type styles in very early examples.

Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, publishers;

The Viking Press, publishers; The Haddon Craftsmen, printers;

Printed by William Tinsdale, for Bernard Binney, at the Sign of the Swan in Fleet Street;

Apud Iohannis Weisburgii (i.e. Johann[es] Weisburg), Impresse Iehan Petit (i.e. Jean Petit), for the Heirs of Claudii Rôiet~[um] (i.e. Claud Rôjet);

or

with the device of Octavianus Scotus on the penultimate blank, in the second state

or

with the Horn Watermark 1a (Briquet); Hain type 1a [3031], (hence) [Mainz] [apud: The Printer of the 42-Line Bible (Johannes Gutenberg and Peter Schoeffer?)] (vide: Proctor: 56);

8.) Format.

Modernists have wrested the Format description from antiquarians, using it now as a sizing chart, as though all books were cut from the same size parent sheets (which today they pretty much are). Nonetheless, Format has only a little to do with the book's size. Printed sheets with a single fold produce Folio books; with two folds, they produce Quartos; with three folds, Octavos, and cetera. Whether using the Modernist description or the antiquarian cataloguer's designation, giving the book's dimensions - as well as spelling out the size if used - is recommended, unless you're cataloguing strictly for other dealers, e.g.:

Crown Folio F° (or 2°) (38 cm by 26 cm);

Demy-Octavo 8vo (20 cm by 14 cm);

Trigesimo-Segundo 32mo (14 cm by 9cm);

Sexagesimo-Quarto 64to (8 cm by 5 cm);

9. Collation, Foliation and Pagination.

Needs a thread of its own. For Modern Books, in most cases, simply following the rules (i.e. if it's numbered, say so; if it's not, put it in brackets) will suffice. Modern collation and pagination are, for the most part, the same thing:

[i - viii] [1, 2] 3 - 366

for a book with four unnumbered preliminary leaves, one unnumbered leaf being pages one and two of the body text, and 366 total pages, the balance numbered.

Collating antiquarian books will give you an headache. Collating Early Printed Books will give you a migraine. Collating incunabula ain't no fun at all.

In all cases, the presence or absence of plates, as called for, prelims, exlims, appendices, advertisements, indices and anything else must be noted.

Books have feelings, and enjoy being handled. This is the reason we collate them. It has nothing at all to do with finding The Enormous Ketchup Stain on page 133, checking the bibliographical points, or realising too late that the last rebinder exchanged the ultimate blank for a leaf whose watermark doesn't match the integral text leaves. If we didn't collate them our clients would eventually find these things for us, and write us nice little notes comprised primarily of quarto words. Collating books is a pain; let's do it anyway; the books will enjoy it. When a book's been collated, and confirmed to be correct and complete, it may be noted as, "C & C" or, "Collated and Complete." We know it's complete when we check the collation in the bibliography and compare the two. After we've done so, we write:

conforms with Hanneman A18

(assuming the book is For Whom The Bell Tolls)

or

conforms to state 1a as Bruccoli A.8.I.a.a

(if it's The Beautiful And The Damned).

If there's no bibliography available, the book can be collated against the deposit copy in The Library Of Congress, right here, online. There are a million excuses for not collating a book; they all begin with the phrase, "I was too lazy to collate this book because...."

Collation Quiz:

Do you have to collate the books you sell? Nope.

If you sell an uncollated book to a customer, and they find a problem, do you have to take it back at your expense? Yep.

If you sell an uncollated book to a customer, and they pretend to find problem so as to send you their copy with The Enormous Ketchup Stain on page 133, will you know if they're telling the truth? Nope.

Do you have to take it back at your expense anyway? Yep.

Why? Because you didn't collate the book, and that's a (big) part of the job of being a bookseller.

If you sell an uncollated book with a problem to a customer, and they give you negative feedback, and tell all their friends about it, resulting in your losing business, is there something you can do to change that?

Nope; there is no time machine to allow for collating books once they've left the shop.

10. Edition Statement

The Edition Statement is the bibliographical description of the position the book holds in the publishing history of the text. Where the edition, impression or printing is stated, it's described,

stated

so stated

or

as stated.

First Edition, stated.

Seventeenth Impression (May, 1940), stated.

Where an edition is inferred bibliographically, it's noted:

[First Edition]; conforms to Giles: 15a.

Where binding colours, textural variances, collation anomalies d cetera are a part of the state or issue points, these should be clearly noted in the Edition Statement, and not buried in the Physical Description.

Yellow cloth variant; white wove paper; six pages of advertisements ending with The Law Of The Land; "listed," for, "lifted," line 16; page 21; conforms to Riley: 36, hence, the First Edition.

Where books are noted as First Edition Thus, owing to significant textural departures, new translations, new illustrators, or any number of addition reasons, give the reason for the designation:

First Colijn Translation, hence, First Edition, Thus.

With annotations and addenda by Kermit The Frog; First Edition, Thus.

First Printed examples of books derived from manuscripts are designated E. P. or, "Editio Princeps." E. P. is not, "a snooty bookseller's term for First Edition;" it's a specific designation afforded the first printed example from a manuscript which predates the use of moveable type. Aldus Manutius' 1495 printing of the Aristotle Omnia Opera EiV öpganon ApiVtotelouV is often referred to as, "the Editio Princeps." It ain't; it's a First Thus; the E. P.

is the 1479 printing of Ambrosius Keller, at Augsburg. Booksellers who would like to lead you to believe otherwise are practising charlatanism.

As to everything which comes after:

11.) Physical Description

12.) Condition Description

13.) Provenance

14.) Bibliographical Citation(s)

15.) Authorial Overview

16.) General Overview

17.) Edition-Specific Overview

it's pretty self-explanatory.

Cataloguing is easy - you choose a formula and a format with which you're comfortable, and stick to it. It becomes second-nature eventually.

Disclaimer: there will be lots of people who'll take issue - God knows, in a thousand different little ways - with the simple cataloguing system noted above. When they do, it should be borne in mind that antiquarian booksellers were using the above format several hundred years before you were born.

Addenda? I'm certain that many salient points were left out; feel free to annotate this general cataloguing overview as needed; what you see here are simply the bare essentials of a mediocre cataloguer. Then again, I ain't bein' paid for this anyway.

The old law remains: when in doubt, spell it out.

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 1:50 AM (# 1 of 44)

Good morning, Joe. Thank you for the wonderful information.

I think first thing in the AM is thee perfect time to start this thread.

adderbolt (1695)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 1:50 AM (# 2 of 44)

Job well done ...

Thanks

ctbooks_starcomm_net (825)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 6:15 AM (# 3 of 44)

fine.books: Thanks, just thanks.

cinnamon7 (525)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 7:01 AM (# 4 of 44)

Very helpful fine.books. Thank you.

satnrose (4190)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 7:46 AM (# 5 of 44)

There are levels and layers of cataloguing which must be venue-appropriate to be effective [or even understandable].

There is the full-fledged whole-nine-yards of full arcane bibliographical description used by the top professionals, which looks like bibliosanskrit to most people.

There is the traditional antiquarian booksellers' argot which has been used for 400 years.

There is the auctionhouse juggling act jargon that mixes the afore with the daft.

There is the modern first edition hocus-pocus puffery.

And lastly, the lowest common denominator slang used by President Lincoln and the Rivermen.

eBay listings can be any of these, but usually the latter.

The connoisseur deep-pocket purchaser of a 1488 Radolt Imitation of Christ is going to want the whole banana split with the cherry on top, presto!

The oldtime serious collectors can read a catalogue entry with care and buy a book sight unseen, but knowing what it will [or at least, should] look like merely from a concise description thereof.

A veteran auction customer will know the tricks of the trade, and be wary.

A first edition aficionado learns who and what to trust.

But the Internet is the Wild West, and there aint no Marshal Dillon. eBay is the County Fair, present your stock as well as you can. I prefer plain, but some prefer fancy. I figure that if they can see that you're honest in your presentation, they'll buy.

erik.h (673)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 8:46 AM (# 6 of 44)

thanks fine, abaizing work.

Can we state that this is the best accepted format for "printed" cataloging, and that even for the best on-line works a couple of changes are needed.

there are perhaps more, but first to mind is elliptical authorship:

Smith, John E[ntwhistle] will not return in a search for "John Entwhistle"...

Also the problem on ABE, where if you use the words such as octavo, quarto, it automatically adds "6*-9* tall" or something.

t

wabbitt15 (692)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 10:02 AM (# 7 of 44)

OK, my curiosity is piqued. Here is a question for a book in hand that breaks a lot of rules.....

© Dodd, Mead and Company, 1894. Edition ns. Dated 1895 to Title Page, and by printed pagination reads vi, 218, 1-28.

Now, this particular title was reprinted seven times to 1898 and only two of those seven are dated to title page (similar paginations, very minor size differentials, wholly different bindings). Because the title is not recorded in BAL as being from a Scottish author, and though the author's works were exceptionally well-received world-wide, there is no definitive bibliography which could impart a reliable chronological assignment to the reprints upon which collectors could rely. With that in mind, here is what the book actually displays:

FFEP; [i-ii] Advert (as to both r & v); Title Page (recto), Imprint Page (verso); [iii-iv]Dedication (recto), Two Lines of Verse (verso); v-vi (Contents); [1] Text; 2-218 Text; [1] Advert; 1-27 Advert; with [ii] Advert (recto), 28 Advert (verso); RFEP.

Now, according to the OP suggestions, would it be proper to consolidate the pagination as thus.....

[i-iv], v-vi, [1], 2-218, [1], 1-28.....with the additional notations that (a) no Half-Title is presented....(b) the publisher has mis-numbered the adverts in the after-text

Grrrrrrrrr.....

fine.books (748)(view author's auctions)

11/17/03 11:29 AM (# 8 of 44)

wabbit: I'd have treated it as a two-volumes-in-one pagination:

[i-iv], v-vi, [1], 2-218, [1²], 1-28²

eric: True, Entwhistle wouldn't come up from that line. Of course, in the expository, a careful cataloguer who knew it was being run through a search engine would begin the Authorial Overview using the writer's full name, "John Entwhistle Smith was educated at Ratbridge University...."

Regarding this being, "the best accepted format for," any medium, it isn't, and wasn't intended to be presented in that light, hence the two disclaimers. It's simply the format with which I'm most familiar, and hence, most comfortable. It's a simplified, fairly straightforward common-language short-form for general cataloguing, with satnrose's BiblioSanskrit excised for clarity and ease of use. BiblioSanskrit [BS for short] is still used by a few dealers, though primarily in their not-for-public-sale catalogues. Honestly, I can't remember the last time I encountered descriptions which included, "TPOG," "FQ<->LQ," or "FE²-d³RM." ("title page laid on a guard," "first and last quires reversed by the binder," "fore-edges of leaves d²-d³ remargined) in a catalogue printed for public consumption.

satnrose (4190)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 12:02 PM (# 9 of 44)

Basically, you have to know what your target audience will understand, tell them what it is and what kind of condition it's in. If you do it right, you won't be bothered with a lot of pesky questions.

The people most likely to buy the Radolt will expect the BS, so give it to them if you can. If you can't, you can still fake it up to a point.....

fine.books (748)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 12:13 PM (# 10 of 44)

'Course we've only ever sold one Ratdolt on eBay (second edition of the Chronicon; 1483; Sancti Hieronymous translation), and that was in the halcyon days of the late 90s, but I think you're right about the balance, satnrose: at some indeterminate price point, buyers begin to expect descriptions to conform, at least in part, to the Old School cataloguers' formulæ.

satnrose (4190)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 12:46 PM (# 11 of 44)

There's still a very workable market of buyers who won't use the Internet and won't touch a computer who want to buy deep-pocket books from reputable dealers with hardcopy catalogues. And they don't need no stinkin pictures neither.

They buy at auction too. Not Internet auctions, but oldline auctions like Sothebys and Christies. They consider Swanns to be an upstart and Waverly and BBC to be hicks from the sticks.....

mydogblue02 (200)(view author's auctions)

11/18/03 3:04 AM (# 12 of 44)

bump

mydogblue02 (200)(view author's auctions)

11/18/03 3:07 AM (# 13 of 44)

^^

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)

11/18/03 3:13 AM (# 14 of 44)

Good morning Mydogblue02. Thank you for the bump up.

I'm still reading my print out of this thread. I can't wait to see the day when I understand it all enough to be able to ask a question I understand what I'm asking about. lol

Having a goal in life is good.

bookbiz (535)(view author's auctions)

11/18/03 1:24 PM (# 15 of 44)

This is an awesome thread --

Didn't Maeve once say that there was some way that threads like this could be "preserved" (her words)?

Are we supposed to do something to bring that about? E-mail somebody or something?

I'll be very upset if this thread gets deleted.

fine: thanx for starting this one. When Zollog takes over eBay, I'll throw a good word in for ya! (hehehe - end of subject - hohoho)

amddifaid (0)(view author's auctions)

11/18/03 8:21 PM (# 16 of 44)

Silly question. I know it's not on a standard keyboard, but where does a person find the way to do those neat little sub numbers? Is there a program in Windows?

sparrowsnestbooks (1804)(view author's auctions)

11/19/03 3:33 AM (# 17 of 44)

Bump (Maeve are you there? Keep at the top, please!!!)

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
11/20/03 5:49 AM (# 18 of 44)

Maeve or Lulu or whoever is there, please save this thread on top. I prefer under FAQ's though.

Thank you.

texas148 (3)(view author's auctions)
11/20/03 9:58 AM (# 19 of 44)

Thanks.

skipper204 (90)(view author's auctions)
11/20/03 11:21 AM (# 20 of 44)

Bump

mydogblue02 (200)(view author's auctions)
11/21/03 9:51 AM (# 21 of 44)

^^

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
11/21/03 10:53 AM (# 22 of 44)

I sent an email to Maeve to have this thread and the library thread saved; preferring to have both placed under FAQ's or their own heading under Book Research on the right.

bookbiz (535)(view author's auctions)
11/21/03 11:09 AM (# 23 of 44)

Thanks quartzie - your effort is appreciated by me and I'm sure many others.

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
11/21/03 11:22 AM (# 24 of 44)

Thankyou but I can't take all the credit. I believe others may have sent an email as well because I learned about sending one on another thread.

skipper204 (90)(view author's auctions)
11/22/03 10:01 AM (# 25 of 44)

bump

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
11/29/03 5:54 PM (# 26 of 44)

This thread still hasn't been saved. I guess emails to Maeve don't work.

cinnamon7 (525)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 9:29 AM (# 27 of 44)

fine.books - I'm going through the Upton Sinclair (pseud. Ensign Clarke Fitch) book and hope to have an auction posted soon (see other thread). I've read through your very helpful guidelines for collation and pagination, but still have some questions concerning how to list the pages. Here is what I have:

Front endpaper [blank]

First page, not numbered - just the words, "Bound for Annapolis"

Second page, not numbered - [blank]

Third page, not numbered - Title page

Fourth page, not numbered - Copyright page

Fifth page, not numbered - begin Table of Contents. First numbered page listed is 7.

Sixth page, Page numbered: ii - continue Table of Contents

Seventh page, not numbered - begin Chapter I of the book

Eighth page, Page numbered: 8 - continue Chapter I text

I'm trying to determine: 1) if all the pages are there, and 2) how the pages should be listed.

Any help you can give is appreciated!

wabbitt15 (692)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 2:21 PM (# 28 of 44)

Yes, all pages of the prelims appear to be there. The pages listing should be taken from the publisher's lead, thus:

[i], ii, [7], 8 - ?

If the final page of the text is unpaginated, that should be shown as [?] where the "?" represents what should be the next succeeding number.

zwish (0)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 2:28 PM (# 29 of 44)

Bump. I like to read this thread when I want a headache...

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 2:38 PM (# 30 of 44)

I read the thread to scare myself by understanding some of it. :)

cinnamon7 (525)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 2:44 PM (# 31 of 44)

Thanks wabbitt!

I'm still checking through the entire book, but it looks like what I have is:

[i], ii, [7], 8 - 269, [270], i - vii, [viii]

The first page of each new chapter is not numbered, so I will amend the above list to account for that. There are publisher advertising pages at the end of the book promoting works by other authors. The last page of the book is printed, but not numbered.

satnrose (4190)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 3:00 PM (# 32 of 44)

[270] pages and 8-pp. of ads.

The formula is meant to be used for antiquarian books. For modern books, KISS.

cinnamon7 (525)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 3:07 PM (# 33 of 44)

Thank you satnrose. That will make it easier. But at least this is good practice for me.

satnrose (4190)(view author's auctions)
12/04/03 3:10 PM (# 34 of 44)

Yes, it's good to learn how to do it.
But you need to know when you need it or no.

ctbooks_starcomm_net (825)(view author's auctions)
12/06/03 5:48 PM (# 35 of 44)

Thump!

skipper204 (90)(view author's auctions)
12/06/03 5:51 PM (# 36 of 44)

Thanks -- now I won't have to dig through the paper!!

caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
12/06/03 6:10 PM (# 37 of 44)

I have this one saved too. I'll try to keep my copy updated.

skipper204 (90)(view author's auctions)
12/08/03 5:55 PM (# 38 of 44)

bump

ranchauctions (573)(view author's auctions)
12/10/03 8:27 AM (# 39 of 44)

bump

ctbooks_starcomm_net (825)(view author's auctions)
12/12/03 12:40 PM (# 40 of 44)

Thump! Did this thread make it?

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
12/26/03 2:52 PM (# 41 of 44)

I don't see this thread saved on the right. It was in with the other threads when Maeve was asked to save it?
Right?

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
01/10/04 1:10 PM (# 42 of 44)

How thick are the glasses eBay wears?

fine.books (748)(view author's auctions)
01/10/04 1:20 PM (# 43 of 44)

Odd... if you look at the posting dates between posts number 41 and 42, more than 14 days have passed since this thread was posted to (no activity between 12/26/03 and 01/10/04). If the purge is automatic, and predicated upon fourteen days' inactivity, shouldn't this thread have vanished along with cornercube's Foodie Thread?

quartzierose (92)(view author's auctions)
01/10/04 1:22 PM (# 44 of 44)

EBay has been lax. The System News states January 9 eBay was cleaning house. I think that is why so many threads are gone.