print culture

An Almanack
for the yere. M. D. lriij.

Compoſed by M. Michael
Noſtradamus Doctour
in Phiſicke, of Salon of
Craux in Prouince.

Whã the ſonne fayleth ye firſt, then ſhal
the monſter be ſeene in the playne day
Men ſhall interpzete it farre otherwiſe
derth hath no reſpect, none ſhall pro-
uide for it.

History of Information
September 17, 2007

overview

codex coda

Eisenstein *vs* Trithemius

Gutenberg & print

European exceptionalism?

a matter of timing?

problems of inheritance

pre-print changes

Karla Nielsen

The late medieval book differs more from its early medieval predecessors than it does from the printed books of our own day. The scholarly apparatus which we take for granted --analytical tables of contents, text disposed into books, chapters, and paragraphs, and accompanied by footnotes and index-- originated in the application of notions of *ordinatio* and *compilatio* by writers, scribes, and rubricators of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.
---M. B. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book"

nights & priests

Morning overtook Shahrazad, and she lapsed into silence. Then her sister Dinzarad said to her, "Sister, what an entertaining story!" Shahrazad replied, "What is this compared with what I shall tell you tomorrow night if I stay alive!?"

early 16th century

Front page to *Amadis of Gaul* (early 16th c. example of gothic font associated with novels of chivalry, the look of the page clearly references the look of a page in a manuscript)

HYPNEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI, VBI HV
MANA OMNIA NON NISISOMNIVM
ESSE DOCET .ATQVE OBITER
PLVRIMA SCITV SANE
QVAM DIGNA COM
MEMORAT.
* * *
* *
*
CAVTVM EST, NE QVIS IN DOMINIO
ILL.S.V.IMPVNE HVNCLI
BRVM QVEAT
IMPPRIME
RE.

Aldus & humanist script

Front page to the *Hypnerotomachia polyphilii* (Aldine edition, early 16th century; example of classical/humanist script; font likely designed with references to Roman letter cutting in stone)

EL INGENIOSO
HIDALGO DON QVI-
XOTE DE LA MANCHA

Compuesto por Miguel de Ceruantes
Saauedra.

Ano.   1605.

Con priuilegio de Castilla, Aragon, y Portugal.
EN MADRID, Por Iuan de la Cuesta.

Vendese en casa de Francisco de Robles, librero del Rey nso señor.

I wanted only to offer it to you plain and bare, unadorned by a prologue or the endless catalogue of sonnets, epigrams, and laudatory poems that are usually placed at the beginnings of books. For I can tell you that although it cost me some effort to compose, none seemed greater than composing the preface you are now reading. I picked up my pen many times to write it, and many times I put it down again because I did not know what to write; and once, when I was baffled, with the paper in front of me, the pen behind my ear, my elbow propped on the writing table, and my cheek resting in my hand, pondering what I would say, a friend of mine, a man who is witty and wise, unexpectedly came in and seeing me so perplexed asked the reason, and I hid nothing form him and said I was thinking about the prologue I had to write for the history of Don Quixote, and the problem was that I did not want to write it yet did not want to bring to light the deeds of so noble a knight without one.

Miguel de Cervantes, trans. Edith Grossman

the widow Wadman

"To conceive this right--call for pen and ink--here's paper ready to your hand.----Sit down, Sir, paint her to your own mind--as you like your mistress as you can--as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you--'tis all one to me--please but your own fancy in it."

⸿ And poſſibly, gentle reader, with ſuch a temptation—ſo wouldſt thou: for never did thy eyes behold, or thy concupiſcence covet, any thing in this world more concupiſcible than widow *Wadman*.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

TO conceive this right—call for pen and ink—here's paper ready to your hand.——Sit down, Sir, paint her to your own mind——as like your miſtreſs as you can——as unlike your wife as your conſcience will let you—'tis all one to me—pleaſe but your own fancy in it.
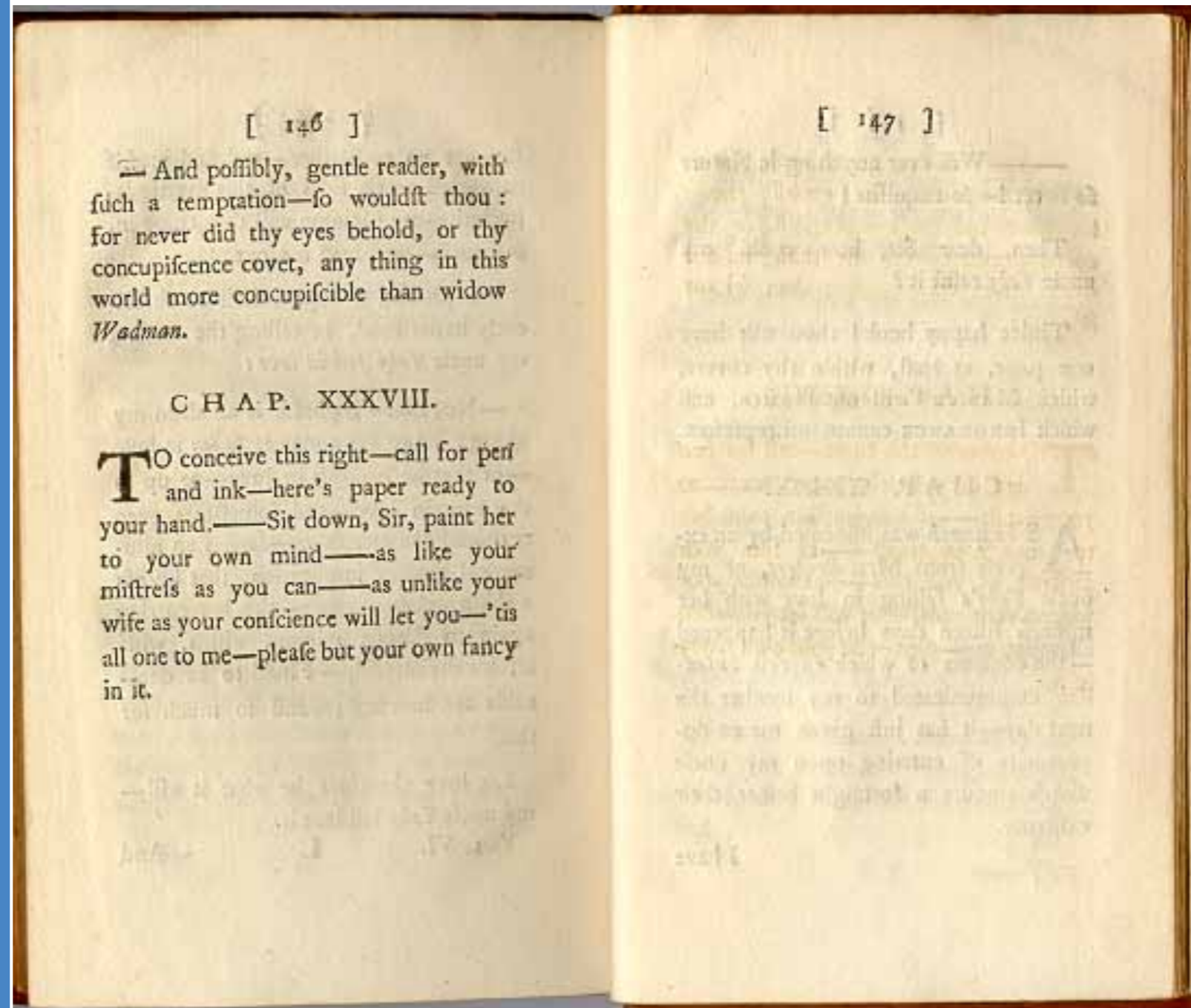
from the patron saint of *Wired*

McLuhan
The Gutenberg Galaxy

Eisenstein
`"an unacknowledged revolution"`

Trithemius vs Eisenstein

scriptorium to printing shop

"Trithemius somewhat illogically compare the written word on parchment which would last one thousand years with the printed word on paper which would have a shorter life span. The possible use of paper ... by copyists, or of skin for a special printed version went unmentioned.... Whether he was genuinely worried about an increased use of paper ... is an open question. ... He used one Mainz Print shop so frequently that"it could almost be called the Sponheim Abbey Press".

--Eisenstein

'the shift from script to print'

"different texts ... were also being brought closer together for individual readers"

"the clerk['s] richer, more varied literary diet than had been provided by the scribe"

"sedentary scholars less apt to be engrossed by a single text"

"knowledge explosion"

"combinatorial intellectual activity"

'the shift from script to print'

"a purification of Christian sources"

"the more standardized the type ... the more compelling the sense of an idiosyncratic personal self"

"the printer seems to have taken over where the clerical scribe left off. But in doing so he greatly amplified and augmented older themes"

"rationalizing, codifying, and cataloguing data"

"from the corrupted copy to the improved edition"

"fixity and cumulative change"

Eisenstein concludes

"classical revival"

"Christendom disrupted"

"nature transformed"

taking sides

recurring questions

1. what happened?

2. what came before?

3. what came after?

4. who was involved?

Johannes Gutenberg
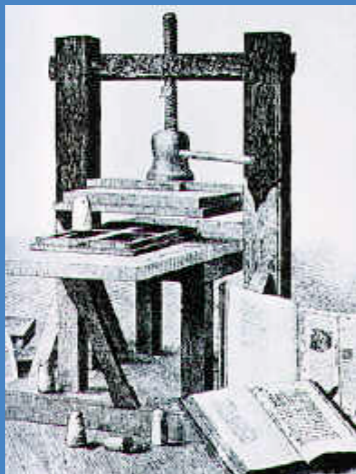
born Mainz

1438: exile, Strasbourg
partners: Riffe, Dritzehn, Helman

1438, December: Dritzehn dies
"4 pieces to be destroyed"

1439: Dritzehn's heirs sue

1450: back in Mainz
creditor Johannes Fust
employee Peter Schöffer
ally Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa

complete works

1454: Cyprus Indulgence

1455: 42-line bible
the Cardinal's connections?

1455: Fust sues, wins
new partnership of Fust & Schöffer
Mainz psalter

7

complete works

1454: Cyprus Indulgence

1455: 42-line bible
the Cardinal's connections?

1455: Fust sues, wins
new partnership of Fust & Schöffer
Mainz psalter

7

complete works

1454: Cyprus Indulgence

1455: 42-line bible
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complete works

1454: Cyprus Indulgence

1455: 42-line bible
the Cardinal's connections?

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new partnership of Fust & Schöffer
Mainz psalter

spread of print

1455 : Mainz

1465: Subiaco, Italy

1470: Paris, Cologne, Strasbourg, Basel, Rome, Venice, Bologna, Seville

1476: London

1480: Budapest, Krakow, Prague, Brussels

the revolution(s)

renaissance

reformation

scientific revolution

capitalism

cause and cure?

Luther and the indulgences of Mainz, 1517

Gutenberg and the indulgence, 1455
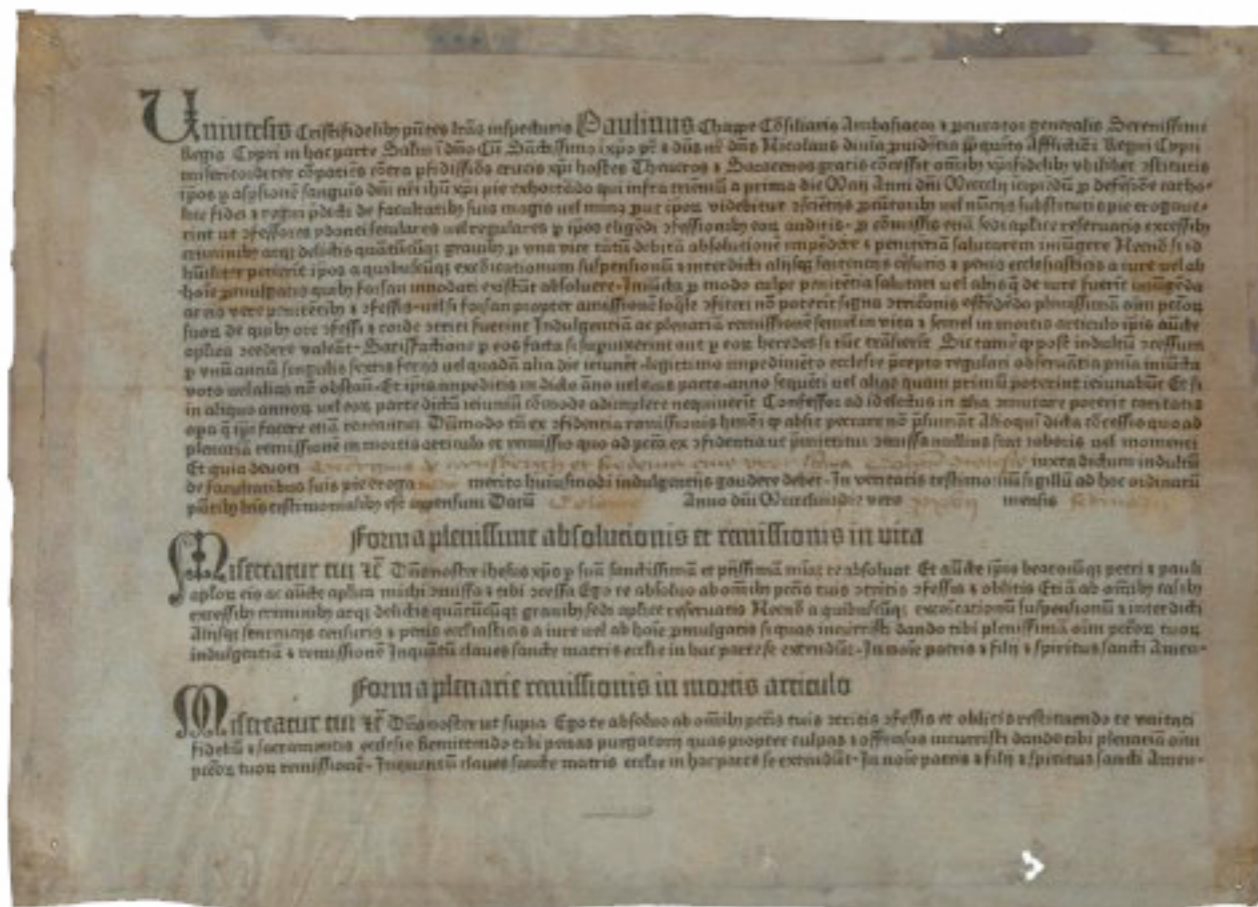
Letterae indulgentiarum, 1455
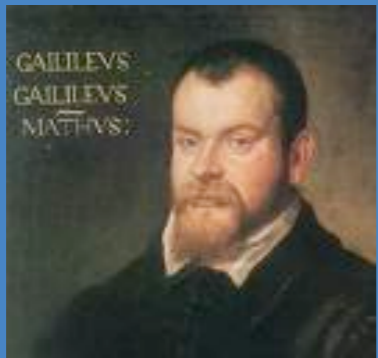
questions of timing?

Gutenberg, d. 1468

Bacon, 1561-1626

Galileo, 1564-1642

Descartes, 1596-1650

Newton, 1642-1727

pseudo-science

almanacs

"for three-and-a-half centuries, the Almanack has been the most popular book in the English language"

1492-1600, probably 600 published

Bosanquet, *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications,* 1917

400,000 a year
William St Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 2005

--diary, encyclopedia, calendar

Mother Shipton
Nostradamus
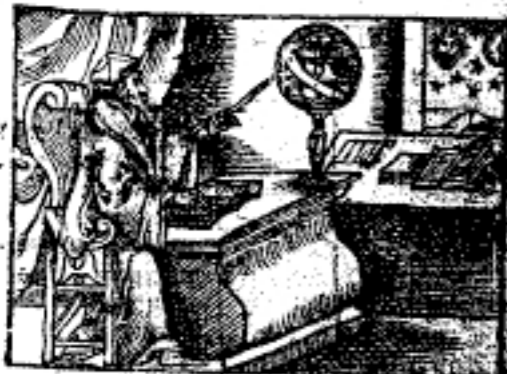
questions of geography

RAND, "printing & the internet"

"The idea of reducing 'printing and publishing' to the Western case alone is not upheld by anyone. On the other hand there are differences between xylography and letter press printing (as there are between alphabetic and ideographic languages). ... two quite different duplicative technologies."

--Eisenstein, RAND 2000

Chinese printing

700 ce: Xylography
earliest printed scrolls

972: 130,000 page *Tripitaka*

1041-1049: clay type

playing cards on the Silk Road

Chinese printing

northern Fujian

"three families of publishers (Liu, Yu, and Xiong) of Jianyang ... wrote, edited, printed, and sold books for over six hundred years ... (mid -eleventh through late seventeenth centuries")... The area was already noted for its flourishing paper trade"

"in the Northern Song in the eleventh century ... tehre were some thirty printing centers ... and some two hundred in the Southern Song" (twelfth century)"

Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit* 2002

Korean printing

700 ce: xylography

918-1392: Koryo Dynasty
three methods of publishing
transcription, xylography, typography

transcription: Royal library; practice
xylography: Buddhist temples
typography: civil service

1087: *Tripitaka Koreana* (xylography)

Steven Wonsuk Kang, "The printing press
in Korea", 2000

Korean printing

"demand side"
949-975: King Kwangjong
Guagou competitive civil service
exams

"supply side"
1231: Mongol invasion
destruction of archives

moveable type

Korean printing

1241: *Yi Munsun Chip*

1337: *Jijki*

1392: Kyosugam (dept. of publishing)

1403: Jujaso (type foundry)

Korean printing

1241: *Yi Munsun Chip*

1337: *Jijki*

**1392:** Kyosugam (dept. of publishing)

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Korean printing
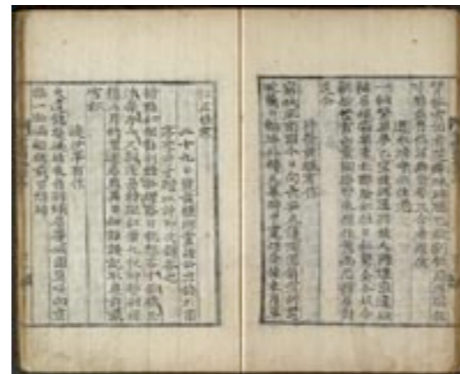
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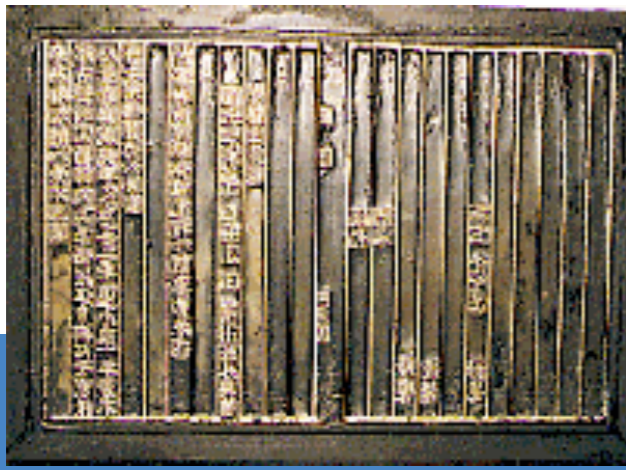
Euro-exceptionalism

"There is a material explanation for the fact that printing developed in Europe in the 15th century rather than in the Far East, even though the principle on which it is based had been known in the Orient long before. **European writing was based on an alphabet composed of a limited number of abstract symbols.** This simplifies the problems involved in developing techniques for the use of movable type manufactured in series. **Chinese handwriting, with its vast number of ideograms requiring some 80,000 symbols, lends itself only poorly to the requirements of a typography.** Partly for this reason, the unquestionably advanced Oriental civilization, of which the richness of their writing was evidence, underwent a slowing down of its evolution in comparison with the formerly more backward Western civilizations."

--Encyclopedia Britannica

28-letter alphabet
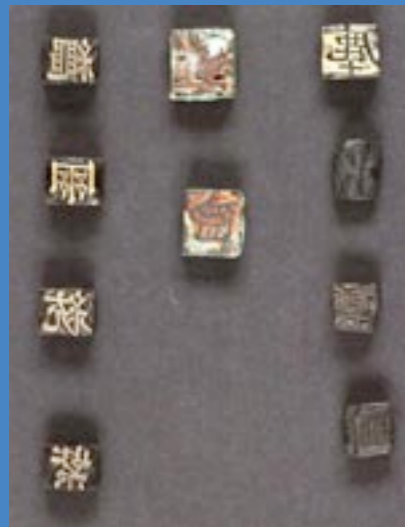
1446: King Sejong establishes Jungeumchung for Hangul alphabet

Hangul used to publish ancestral poems, pronunciation guides, Confucian morals, ...

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"Printing in the Chosun dynasty was
developed by the government because
       the government was the only
 institution that could afford to
 develop printing technology."
              -- Steve Wonsuk Kang.
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secret history?

"[E]ither the Germanes borrowed this Invention from the Chineses, or at leastwise the Chineses had the practise & vse of it long before them.

George Hakewill, *An Apology of the Power*,1627

"Whether the Germans first borrowed this Invention from the Chineses, or whether amongst the Germans (who undoubtedly lay best claim to it) Iohn Gutenberg the Knight of Mentz, or Iohn Fust a Moguntine, was the first Inventor thereof, it matters not."

Robert Heath, *Paradoxical Assertions*, 1659

problems of inheritance

TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENT.

CHAPTER I.

the search for copy

"Book-sellers follow their owne

judgment in printing the antient

Authors according to such Text as

they found extant ... Errors

repeate & multiply in every

Edition".

-- John Evelyn, 1666

problems of authenticity

piracy and plagiarism

"Martin Luther's German translation of scripture was actually beaten into print by its first piracy."

Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, 1998
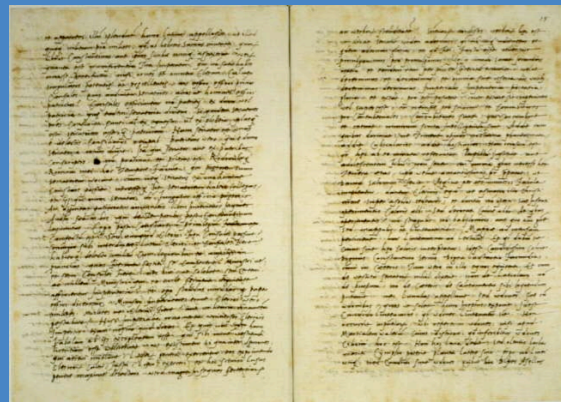
problems of fixity

"[Shakespeare's] first folio [1623] ... boasted some six hundred different typefaces along with nonuniform spelling and punctuation, erratic divisions and arrangements, mispaging, and irregular proofreading. No two copies were identical. "

--Johns

the search for truth

"donations of Constantine"

"false decretals"

"Historical criticism became a
Protestant weapon, and documents were
used as missiles."
James Thompson, "The Age of Mabillon",
1942

historical criticism

"a certain band of fellows existed, some
centuries ago, who had undertaken the
task of concocting ancient history as we
now have it, there being at that time
none in existence; ... they had as aids
the works of Cicero, Pliny, the *Georgics*
of Vergil, the *Satires* and *Epistles* of
Horace. These alone ... [are] the
genuine monuments out of the whole of
Latin antiquity"
Grafton, "The Antiquary as Pariah", 1999

detective work

back to the monastery

"the Reformation era ... bringing to
light thousands of documents ..
hitherto inaccessible and
unknown. ... France pioneered in this
new historical research ...
Mabillon .... Montfaucon".

--Thompson

science of diplomatics

Jean Mabillon (1632-1707)

De Re Diplomatica, 1681
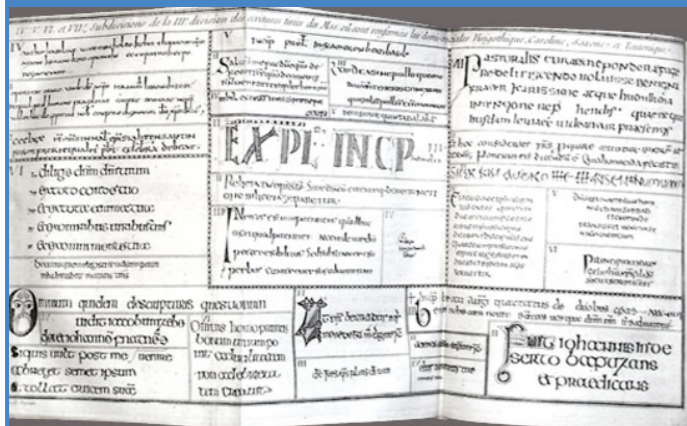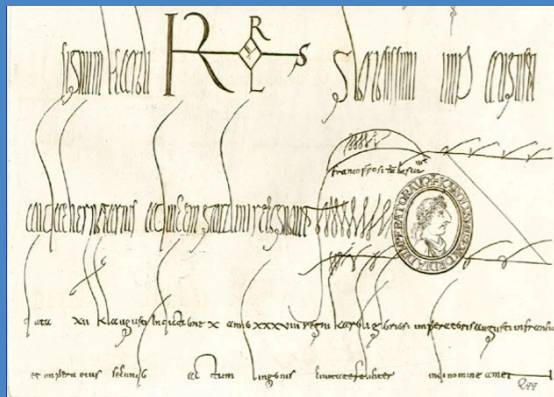
opposing

Paperbroche

Acta Sanctorum 1675

"The Benedictine order ... regarded
Paperbroche's work as ... an attack on
their property rights"
--Thompson

beyond the page

"Mabillon frankly admitted that the authenticity of a charter could not be proved by any metaphysical or *a priori* argument; a decision could be reached only after the expert had examined a whole series of different indications -- the material used, the seal, the signature, the grammar and orthography, the modes of address, the plausibility of the dating, the intrinsic consistency of the whole document".

David Knowles

a guide to forgery

the charter of La Tour d'Auvergne

"skilfully forged [using Mabillon

s principles] by a sublibrarian who ended

his days in the Bastille"

--David Knowles

summary

revolution(s)?

what did & did not come before?

what happened?

what came after?

technology, practices, & institutions

(un)reliability