

AN  
**AbC**  
OF HERITAGE LIBRARIES





## ACQUISITIE // ACQUISITION

Each heritage library has its individual thematic or regional profile. Collections are expanded and enriched via carefully considered acquisitions and a well thought-out donation policy.



## BIBLIOFIEL // BIBLIOPHILE

Many heritage libraries owe thanks to the zeal of bibliophile collectors. They also preserve modern bibliophile editions, books executed in exceptional formats.



## CATALOGUS // CATALOGUE

A library's assets are described in a catalogue according to strict rules. This used to be done on index cards kept in special cabinets. Today, online catalogues are used, allowing readers to locate publications from home.



## DIGITALISERING // DIGITISATION

Important, vulnerable or frequently used titles are digitised to protect them and make them more available. Originals no longer need to be manipulated and digital copies can be accessed globally via the internet. Automatic character recognition allows 'paper' text to be searched.



## EX LIBRIS // EX LIBRIS

Collectors often paste or stamp an ex libris with their name and a figurative, emblematic image in their books. Such provenance marks are also found in historical books and serve as a primary source for researchers of the reading cultures of the past.

## FORMAAT // FORMAT

Printed books are made up of quires, which can have varying formats. The largest 'folio' format consist of four pages. It is created by folding a sheet of paper once. An additional fold results in a 'quarto' format of eight pages and a third fold in an 'octavo' format of sixteen pages.



## GOUDSTEMPELING // GOLD TOOLING

Books used to be bound in leather or parchment. The binding was sometimes tooled, using gold leaf to give books their characteristic sparkle. Contemporary book binders use gold tooling rather creatively.



## HANDSCHRIFT // MANUSCRIPT

In the Middle Ages, all books were manuscripts. Texts were written and copied by hand, usually on parchment. From coloured initials to highly detailed miniatures: the variety of the illuminations knows no bounds. As a result, each manuscript is a unique object.



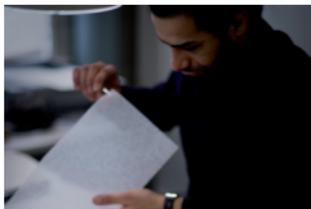
## INCUNABEL // INCUNABLE

In the 1450s, Johannes Gutenberg stood at the cradle of book printing when he created his famous Bible using movable type. That is why printed works from the fifteenth century are called 'incunables' or 'incunabula' (Latin for 'cradles').



## JAPANS PAPIER // JAPANESE PAPER

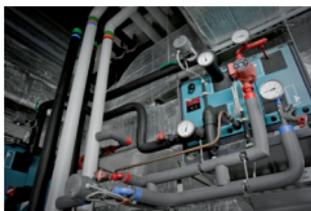
Japanese paper is made from fibres of the mulberry tree. It is very durable and nearly invisible when applied to a light background. That makes it ideal for restoring tears and holes in paper documents.





## PRESERVERING // PRESERVATION

Special collection items in libraries are at risk of all sorts of damage: from water and fire, from fluctuations in light or temperature, and also from dust, pests or frequent use. With the right measures in place, damage is prevented and curative actions can be avoided.



## QUARANTAINE // QUARANTINE

A calamity can cause documents to become damp, making them prone to moulding. To stop mould growth and to prevent spread to other parts of the collection, the affected items are placed in quarantine until treated.



## REPRODUCTIE // REPRODUCTION

Readers are not always handed the authentic document. Fragile newspapers, for example, are less and less consulted in paper form. Microfilm copies and digital renditions serve as a substitute. To help protect the originals, libraries also provide reproductions of valuable manuscripts and rare books.



## SIGNATUUR // SHELF MARK

In a heritage library, the storage location of a document is determined by its dimensions and the special care it may need. Each item receives its own 'signature' or shelf mark. This combination of letters, numbers or other symbols allows library assistants to easily retrieve works from the stacks.



## TYPOGRAFIE // TYPOGRAPHY

Typography is a synonym for printing with movable type, but it can also refer to page design. The setting of balanced and attractive pages is a trade by itself, as is the application of suitable type faces. This used to be the domain of the compositor or type setter. Today, graphic designers take on this role.





## UITGEVERSBAND // PUBLISHER'S

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, books were usually sold unbound. It was up to the buyer to approach an artisan binder. From 1800 on, publishers began to determine how bindings were executed. They started to tailor the cover design to the content of the book.



## VERZURING // PAPER DEGRADATION

In the nineteenth and twentieth century, paper was made mainly from wood pulp. This kind of paper deteriorates rather fast. Transferring documents to microfilm or digital formats helps preserve the information they hold. The originals must be protected from environmental factors that speed up the decay.



## WATERMERK // WATERMARK

For a long time, paper was made by hand. When holding such paper to the light, the typical chain lines made by the woven copper wires from the mould or 'deckle' are clearly visible. A watermark is found in the centre of the sheet. The figure usually referred to the mill where the paper was made.



## XML // XML

Much of tomorrow's heritage, like e-books and electronic journals, is no longer published on paper but in digital formats only. The rapid evolution of ICT turns the long term preservation of 'e-heritage' into a serious challenge. System-independent formats like XML help ensure the future legibility of information.



## YZERGALLUSINKT // IRON GALL INK

From the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, documents were written in iron gall ink. This acidic ink gradually eats its way through the paper. Ink corrosion treatment can slow down the decay, but cannot prevent it entirely.

## ZORG // CARE

Heritage libraries care for our printed, written and digital heritage. Through their efforts, these literary, cultural and academic collections are made accessible for today's readers and preserved for future generations.



## AN ABC OF HERITAGE LIBRARIES

© 2010–2014 Vlaamse Erfgoedbibliotheek, Antwerp

Concept and coordination: Eva Wuyts

Photography: Stefan Tavernier

Edited by: Eva Wuyts, Pierre Delsaerd

Translation: David Coppoolse, Susanna De Schepper

## WITH THE KIND COOPERATION OF

Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience, Antwerp  
Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room, Antwerp

Antwerp University Library

Averbode Abbey Library

Bruges Public Library

Bibliotheca Wittockiana, Brussels

Royal Conservatory Brussels

Ghent University Library

Limburg Provincial Library, Hasselt

KU Leuven University Library

De Bethune Foundation, Marke

Bibliotheca Wasiana, Sint-Niklaas

## VLAAMSE ERFGOEDBIBLIOTHEEK

Flanders Heritage Library is a network of heritage libraries, established in 2008 by

- Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience, Antwerp
- Antwerp University Library
- Bruges Public Library
- Ghent University Library
- Limburg Provincial Library, Hasselt
- KU Leuven University Library

Through projects and research, we develop competence and spread knowledge about preserving heritage library collections and making them accessible. Additionally, we wish to raise awareness about the riches of heritage library collections in Flanders and Brussels.

## GETTING IN TOUCH

[www.flandersheritagelibrary.be](http://www.flandersheritagelibrary.be)  
[info@flandersheritagelibrary.be](mailto:info@flandersheritagelibrary.be)

Vlaamse Erfgoedbibliotheek  
Hendrik Conscienceplein 4  
2000 Antwerpen  
Belgium  
+32 3 338 8792

## OUR ONLINE SERVICES

[flandrica.be](http://flandrica.be)  
Flandrica.be. Heritage Libraries Online

[stcv.be](http://stcv.be)  
STCV. The Bibliography of the Hand Press Book

[abraham-online.be](http://abraham-online.be)  
Abraham. Belgian Newspaper Catalogue

[collectiewijzer.be](http://collectiewijzer.be)  
Heritage Library Collection Guide

With the support of  
the Flemish authorities

