

# Book History 101

## Linda Hall Library President's Circle Workshop

January 26, 2021

Dr. Jamie Cumby, Assistant Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts  
Contact: [cumbyj@lindahall.org](mailto:cumbyj@lindahall.org)

The following handout includes resources for further reading and exploration, as well as a list of vocabulary words that are covered in this session (with spaces for notes). The final page is an exercise that will challenge you to test your book historical thinking using books in the library's collection.

### Digital Resources

- *Glossary of Common Latin Terms Found in Imprints of Early Printed Books* by Robert L. Maxwell: <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~catalog//people/r/m/glossary/glossary.htm>
- *The Atlas of Early Printing*, University of Iowa: <https://atlas.lib.uiowa.edu/>
- *Impressed by Plantin*, Museum Plantin-Moretus: <https://www.museumplantinmoretus.be/en/content/impressed-plantin>
- Linda Hall Library Digital Collections: [https://catalog.lindahall.org/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LINDAHALL\\_INST:LHL](https://catalog.lindahall.org/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LINDAHALL_INST:LHL)

### Videos

- Stan Nelson and the Atelier Press & Letterfoundy videos:
  - [Punchcutting](#)
  - [Punches & Matrices](#)
  - [Casting Type](#)
  - [Dressing Type](#)
- [Upside down, left to right](#) (Danny Cooke, Plymouth University)
- [Learning typesetting](#) (1959)
- [Papermaking by hand](#) (Bygones, 1976)
- [How Ink is Made](#) (The Printing Ink Company)
- The Machine that Made Us (BBC, presented by Stephen Fry): parts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#) & [5](#)
- [Bookbinder](#) (Toronto Standard)
- Handsewn bookbinding (Abacus [Florence] [in Italian](#)): parts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) & [4](#)

## Recommended General Reading

- Harry Carter. *A View of Early Typography*. (Hyphen, 2002). Originally published by Oxford University Press in 1969.
- John Carter. *ABC for book collectors*. (Oak Knoll Press, 2004) [also available online](#).
- Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin. *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*. Trans. David Gerard. (Verso, 2010). Originally published in French as *L'apparition du livre* in 1958.
- Sara Werner. *Studying Early Printed Books 1450-1800: A Practical Guide*. (Wiley, 2019).

## Basic Vocabulary

Laid paper \_\_\_\_\_

Wove paper \_\_\_\_\_

Vellum/parchment \_\_\_\_\_

Watermark \_\_\_\_\_

Format

- Broadsheet/Broadside \_\_\_\_\_

- Folio \_\_\_\_\_

- Quarto \_\_\_\_\_

- Octavo \_\_\_\_\_

Intaglio \_\_\_\_\_

Relief \_\_\_\_\_

Etching \_\_\_\_\_

Engraving \_\_\_\_\_

Woodcut \_\_\_\_\_

Fount \_\_\_\_\_

## Basic Vocabulary (con't):

Typeface

- Gothic \_\_\_\_\_
- Roman \_\_\_\_\_
- Italic \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise: What can a book tell us about itself?

For this exercise, you will put your book historical mindset to the test by developing research questions for books from the Library's History of Science collection. For each book, come up with two questions that can be answered by looking at the book's material features alone. This can include analysis of information from the title page or colophon, but not the text itself. You may consult the catalog record to check your analysis of each book, but you are encouraged to see how far you can get working on your own or with a partner. What kinds of things can the physical properties of books tell us about the ways in which they were produced, distributed, and used?

**Book 1:** Hyginus, [\*Poeticon astronomicon\*](#) (Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1485)

- Question 1:
- Question 2:

**Book 2:** Johannes Bayer, [\*Uranometria\*](#) (Augsburg, Christoph Mang, 1603)

- Question 1:
- Question 2: