Authority control of printers, publishers & booksellers

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The whole structure of the FRBR document [20] and, in particular, the concept of *manifestazione*, as stated and investigated at section 3.2.3 [Manifestation] and 4.4 [Attributes of Manifestation], seems to be somehow influenced by the remarks on the work, title and author made in the 80's, especially by Donald F. McKenzie's [27] comments on the bibliography and sociology of the texts (it is worth mentioning some remarks such as "forms effect meaning" and "new readers of course make new texts, and their new meanings are a function of their new forms") and Gerard Genette's [12] considerations on the editorial paratext and peritext.

As far as the latter aspect is concerned, the functions of publisher, printer and bookseller, in the years of hand printing, seemed to be quite interesting, as well as the way they got connected with the Manifestation. Some years ago, during the Workshop organized by the Tuscan division of AIB, it was highlighted [34] that FRBR lays great emphasis on the Manifestation, as it represents a traditional doorway to old books. On the other hand, it has been often argued that the issue of access normalization within old books' cataloguing seems much more problematic as compared to modern cataloguing. We agree with Mauro Guerrini [14] who, some years ago, complained about the lack of authority files in Italy, including those of the people in charge of publishing, who are closely connected with the manifestation. In other words, to use a more modern language, the publishers, printers and booksellers. Hence, the shape given to their denominations acquires a great importance when this element turns into a stable and fundamental access key to bibliographic information. It is indeed a very useful feature for the identification of the manifestation, which is often based on more objective data (as they are partly material) than the other access keys (author, title, subordinate contributions and so on). The person in charge of publishing, -that is, of the Manifestation - is often given a personal name and a corporate body as well. His statement is important as so as the author or the translator and sometime is more important. Anyway, it is a context that is often on the go, in which economic and commercial occurrences

intertwine with family, institutional and political events. If he is a printer, he leaves a sort of a finger-print in books. We remember that type-face and type-size in the FRBR Final Report are attributions of a Manifestation.

Changes of seat, name, corporate name, signatures, as well as alliances, partnerships, inheritances, weddings and widowhoods and frequent cases of homonymy and semi-homonymy get those in charge of the Manifestation – especially (though not only) in the days of hand printing – to move on a rough, treacherous and sometimes fallacious ground, though still very rich in information and always fascinating. To say nothing of the chapters dealing with counterfeits and fakes, or the extraordinary one about censorship. In this way an authorithy-file is very complicated, because it has to record non only a simply personal name, like Francesco Fusi, Giovanni Resnati or Anton Fortunato Stella, or a corporate body like the 'Società tipografica dei classici italiani', but even to create a connction between the two. By the way, we have not only a **first** 'Società tipografica dei classici italiani' (1802, april – 1818, december), founded by Giovanni Angelo Borsa, Innocenzo Domenico Giusti and Giulio Ferrario, but also a **second** (Fusi, Stella & Co., 1819, january- 1824, december) and at last a **third** (directed by Francesco Fusi from 1825, january). [2]

These data are available not only to book scholars; they are rightly part of an irremissible informative heritage that the cataloguing process (and not only that related to old books) must supply. That's the reason why the normal access through person in charge of the manifestation must cease to be a mere index element and turn into a thesaurus. Thus, it must be supplied with an authority control, the only one that may allow the user not only to enter a document, but also to link it with those sharing certain features, such as, for instance, the responsibility of the manifestation.

In past centuries, when was the first time that the access through publisher/printer/bookseller was deemed useful to recover bibliographic information and which form was the most suitable for that purpose? Such moment seems to date back to the XVIII century; the form was that of the index species. We can reasonably think that the annals genre – a bibliographic *tout court* genre – was the one that produced this effect in the cataloguing field. That's what originated the trend to create chronological lists which highlighted the place where publishing occurred and the people in charge. In addition, there is evidence testifying to the

importance of indexes within this new bibliographic genre that starts to become popular in the first half of the XVIII century.

In 1773, in the Preface to the first supplementary volume of his famous *Annales Typographici ab artis inventae origine ad annum MD*, defined as 'the first attempt to chronologically and alphabetically retrieve the European publishing production, from the origins of printing up to 1664" [36], Michael Mattaire gave the following definition of the nature and composition of the alphabetic index: "*Index*, quem molior, non nuda tantum librorum authorumque nomina complectetur; sed *titulos*, quantum ad brevem notitiam sufficiat, declarabit; & quo *loco annoque*, per quem *typographum*, necnon qua voluminis *forma* libri prodierint, indigitabit" [26]. Although not all the words written in italics do become doorways to information, the previous passage casts light upon the new-born function of an access through 'person in charge of publishing, printing and distribution". That is confirmed, some years later, by the homonymous work *Annales typographici*, written by Georg Wolfgang Panzer (1793 – 1803) [31]. Nevertheless, no mention of an access through publisher is to be found in the two masterpieces of booksellers' antiquarian bibliography: Jacques Charles Brunet's *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, [10] first published in Paris in 1810, and the *Trésor de livres rares et précieux ou nouveau dictionnaire bibliographique contenant plus de cent mille articles de livres rares, curieux et recherchès* ….., written by Georg Theodor Graesse [13] and published in Dresda between 1859 and 1869. That seems quite strange, since the world of book antiques has been affecting the customs concerning old books for a long time.

As for Italy, a peculiar emphasis on the manifestation element is to be found in Pellegrino Orlandi's work, *Origine e progressi della stampa o sia dell'arte impressoria e notizie dell'opere stampate dall'anno M.CCCC.LVII. sino all'anno M.D.*, [29] published in Bologna in 1772 and belonging to the 'typographic annals" genre. On an international level, 1891 represents a turning point; it's the year when Konrad Burger [11] publishes the *Indices Uberrimi* of Ludwig Han's *Repertorium bibliographicum* (1826) [15]. These are, of course, printer, publisher and bookseller indexes of the incunabula described in the list. But that probably was the first catalogue to mark the ultimate striking off in the fruitful pre– and post-war days of the British Museum's Short-Titles, as, from now onwards, no printing catalogue of old books would ever be deemed acceptable if it lacked an index of printers,

publishers & booksellers. We mean the the age from Pollard & Redgrave's works to the Katharine Pantzer's [33, 6, 7, 8, 9, 37, 30] one.

What's happening nowadays? We see paper turning into electronics, that is the traditional indexes in printing catalogues (or paper cards' headings) turning into access keys. As for the electronic catalogues of old books, publishers and printers usually represent a new entry. There still exists, however, a certain heterogeneity, despite the many attempts of authority files, especially on a national level. We will now examine some examples of data-base: that of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, [3] and in Italy 'Sbn antico", [18] Edit16, [16] at international level Hand Press Book (HB) [17] (by Consortium of Eureopean Research Libraries), then ISTC, and so on…. We would also examine the criteria of some paper bibliographies. Some of these originate indeed from the data-base itself, such as the one carried out in France by J. D. Mellot and E. Queval, the *Repertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires XVIe- XVIIe siècle. État en 1995 (4000 notices)*, Paris : Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997. Jean Dominique Mellot himself described its genesis in one of the « Cerl Papers » (n. 11) [28]. It is designed in accordance with two main needs, a librarianship one and a scientific one: the first need is to refine cataloguing and make indexing richer, thanks to the 'fichiers d'autorité" provided by the informatics; the second one is to obtain a first-class access for a growing number of scholars and researchers who are interested in book history, edition and material bibliography. It's worth reminding that most major catalogues only quote the place of the publication, the initial of the name and the surname of the editor, publisher or bookseller . The recovery of the above mentioned data is getting more and more important for retrospective bibliographies. As we said, in post-war years, the indexes of retrospective catalogues, especially the British Museum STCs, also gain importance, as well as the generalization of card files according to editors and places of edition in French libraries since the 70s. But in italian libraries there was atime in which this happened as well. Here I can remember card catalog of Alberto Tinto for the XVIth century books in National Library in Rome and Fernanada Ascarelli's for Alessandrina Library in Rome too, confining myself to speak about catalogs I used long time. In 1987 the *Guide pour la redaction des notices d'autorité imprimeurs/libraries en format Intermarc* [4] was published. In 1988, with the first publication of the list, this huge amount of data becomes available to the public. The growth is considerable: 1000 news in 1988, 2000 in 1991, 4000 in

1997, about 5200 in 1999. Maria Luisa López Vidriero [24] argues that this task should be performed by the National libraries. Of course, the data base is not significant since, from a geographic point of view, French editions and – chronologically speaking – XVIII century editions are highly favoured. When a huger and huger amount of bibliographic data becomes available, thanks to the retrospective conversion of catalogues as well, it would be unthinkable that the users weren't provided with the specific keys for its exploitation. The *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraries* is one of these new instruments of research: it's more improved than the indexes, less exhaustive, but it's richer and more improvable than the national *thesauri*. Among these national *thesauri*, it's well worth a mention the one used in the data-base Edit 16 (Census of XVIth century italian books) of Iccu, a national bibliographic agency. Tomorrow Claudia Leoncini will speak about this, which has benefited from a brilliant individual work, that is, the one carried out by Gedeon Borsa in his *Clavis typographorum librariorumque Italiae*, 1465-1600 [5]. Since the very beginning in the early 80's, Edit 16 has been improving and refining the work of the Hungarian bibliographer, first aiming at the publication of paper volumes and eventually designing a data-base that has been on-line for three years. When searching for an entry, this data-base quotes the standard entry with all the variants appearing in the different editions (i.e., under the entry "Compagnia Minima" we can find "Minima Societas", and so on.) Maybe it is needless to underline how important the definition of a standard entry is, as this promotes the adoption of homogeneous forms, also by researchers, in the essays dealing with book history, in the bibliographies and in the quotations, thus enabling a quicker and more accurate spreading of information. The pre-1831 books archive of the National Library Service (Servizio bibliotecario nazionale, Sbn) provides access through "editor" and "printer" but, at the moment, it is not working out anything that might compare to an authority file. Access form must be complete. For example if we search "Società tipografica dei classici", we don't find anything, but if we add "italiani", we have 290 records. Even though we shall hear tomorrow new informations by Claudia Fabian, finally, I wish to report an experience concerning a European data-base, the Hand Press Book of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL). Italy is taking part in this project with other 28 major European bodies and libraries. The aim is to design a central European data-base for old printed materials. The Consortium will use a "cluster" system for

the bibliographic records coming from member countries, with a selected record for a given edition and all the other records linked "in bunches" to one another and with the users having a chance to navigate inside the grid. The Consortium has now started to test a 'thesaurus file', that is a system choosing as a starting record the form of the name linked to the bibliographic record, and which also enables to link any form to each other. Such forms are considered "authorized forms", as they have been established in compliance with the different national rules. "As a principle CERL shall not impose the authoritative form of a name". The sistem has been illustrated by W. Schwartz [35] in the *CERL Meeting* in Padova, november 10th 1999 and then refreshed by Cristina Magliano [25] in the Bologna Conference about *Archivi e voci d'autorità*.

Anyway the world of information, which is nowadays endowed with huge potentialities but is also tainted by the approximations of the search engines, can be affected by the introduction of antibodies. As far as the Internet chaos is concerned, during a Conference on Authority Control in the Archives that took place some time ago, it was stated what follows: "We can rely on nothing but our traditional deontology to face this problem, preserving our cultural heritage and spreading it through the new technological means. This implies the adoption of univocal descriptive formats, at least for the personal data of individual objects and series. This doesn't mean that we should give up the specific modes of connotation and contextualization of such objects, which must keep their own differences according to the category they belong to. Nevertheless, all the instruments that we might apply to our charts, codes or registries would turn out to be completely useless unless we work out headings and key-words specifically designed to make our "treasures" available in the net" [32].

Hence, it was suggested that an authority file should be designed by each national agency for their printers, publishers & booksellers – just as it happens with the authors – to create a Virtual International authority file of the persons in charge of publication, distribution and printing. Such file should be eventually used in all national and international contexts, as well as CERL indirectly does too. The *Guidelines for authority records and references* [21] will have to be a point of reference, though useful clues can be found in the world of archives and in the document called *International Standard for Archival Authority Records* (Corporate

Bodies, Persons, Families) [19], by means of which rules have been suggested to design authority files for archive producers. The world of art history might supply some other useful information, having experienced the application of an authority control to some data-bases [22, 23].

We remember the *Osservazioni* [1] on FRBR, of the "Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, Gruppo di studio sulla catalogazione": "Il catalogo non si presenterebbe più come lista, ma come l'universo di questo reticolo, percorribile per tappe contigue a partire da qualsiasi punto; un elenco bibliografico sarebbe una sorta di percorso attraverso il reticolo". At last bibliographers would realize their dream: a thesaurus for annals of printing press in the *ancien régime.* That will be possible only if bibliographers, historians of books and catalogers in libraries and in bibliographic agencies, will co-operate as strictly as possible. This co-operation concerns not only authority-file of printers, publishers & booksellers, but also all the aspects of hand-printed books cataloging, like – for example – the item "entity", the copy-data, which recently has gone rise, and which *FRBR Final report* seems to look at.

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