

Oxford Bibliographical Society Grant Report

Sian Witherden and Hannah Ryley

In May 2017, Sian Witherden and Hannah Ryley were delighted to receive £470 from the Oxford Bibliographical Society in order to record Balliol College Library's collection of early printed books in Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI). This was generously matched by Balliol College. Sian and Hannah were in a position to undertake this work thanks to the training and continued support of Geri Della Rocca de Candal.

MEI is an online database that records evidence of ownership so that the movement of early printed books can be tracked across space and time. *MEI* is part of the 15cBOOKTRADE project, which has recently received international attention and praise in the *Financial Times* and *Corriere della Sera*.

Receiving funding from the Oxford Bibliographical Society enabled Sian and Hannah to train a third researcher, James Misson. Together, the three of them have made significant progress towards cataloguing Balliol's incunables. In total, Balliol College has 77 incunables, 10 of which had been recorded in *MEI* before they joined the project. Since May 2017, the team have completed work on 50 of these incunables, some of which are multi-volume works and therefore require only one record in *MEI*. Sian, Hannah, and James have also made steps towards completing research on a further 8 volumes, leaving only 5 which they have yet to start. This work should be completed within the next month.

Sian, Hannah, and James would like to thank the Oxford Bibliographic Society for their support, which has helped them to hone their research skills in palaeography, codicology, and digital humanities. By working with the extensive collection of incunables in Balliol College Library, the team have encountered a wide variety of bindings, early hands, and other indicators of provenance such as bookplates and inscriptions.

The team's progress on the Balliol College Library collection, in addition to similar research completed by them at Worcester and Harris Manchester College Libraries, has substantially contributed to the Oxford-based evidence in *MEI*. Moreover, Sian, Hannah, and James's work has raised the profile of *MEI* in Oxford colleges and they look forward to further work over the coming year.