



The reconstruction of BIBLIOTHECA DÖBELIANA

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Abstract:

The paper/speech is about the difficulties in making a physical reconstruction of a library which has been incorporated in a main collection in the 19-th century. The example is the library of Johan Jacob Döbelius, donated to the Lund University Library in 1718 and dispersed to main collection around 1880. For some books there will be an absolute sure proveniens, but for a great part you will have to make an detective work with small signs and circumstances to get as good evidence as possible. The result shows the importance of documentation when books and collections are handled over long term periods in a great Library.

Johan Jacob Döbelius was born in Rostock on 29 March 1674. After studying in Rostock, Copenhagen, Danzig and Warsaw he obtained a doctor's degree in Rostock 1695. On a trip to England in 1696 a westerly storm blew the ship to Gothenburg – and Döbelius chose to stay and practice medicine in Sweden. From 1710 he was Professor of Medicine at Lund University. He discovered, examined and opened the health spa in Ramlösa for public use. In our day his portrait on the Ramlösa bottle labels has been spread all over the world.

He was knighted von Döbeln in 1717; in 1733 he became a member of the Royal Swedish Society of Sciences in Uppsala and in 1736 of the German Acad. Naturae Curiosorum. Johan Jacob von Döbeln died on 14 January 1743.

The collection

In 1718 von Döbeln delivered a considerable collection of books, 'not present in the library, but yet necessary'. This involved about 1,400 works bound in about a thousand volumes. The main part of the collection comes from von Döbeln's private library, enriched by inheritances from his father and maternal grandfather.

The majority of the books are bound in contemporary parchment. Most fields are represented, but medicine, theology, philosophy, classical authors, history and linguistics dominate – one fifth of the collection consists of medicine.

This treasure of books ‘disappeared’ when it was incorporated with the library’s main collection during the later part of the 19th century. The now ongoing project intends to reconstruct the collection of books, by identifying, cataloguing and physically recreating the old library.

Reconstruction and access

At the time of the donation the titles were briefly recorded in an accession catalogue. From these the works have been identified by Professor Dr Karl-Heinz Jügelt of Rostock, and with the help of the library staff the volumes have been retrieved from the main collection.

In the accession catalogue, as was customary, the books are divided according to size. The three groups named Pi (fol.), Rho (4:o) and Si (8:o) are now restored. There are quite a lot of interesting detective work of establishing the provenance of Döbelius books – there can have been several copies of a work coming into and leaving the University Library during 300 years. There will be shown some examples of the practical work with identifying the books, which can be of relevance for everyone working with reconstructions of collections.

The collection will have several search options in the electronic catalogue, not only author and title but also provenance and binding. Every post will also be found in the Swedish national catalogue LIBRIS. Pictures will be added to each work and that information will be most valuable for research, but also as “fingerprints” of our copies. Bibliotheca Döbeliana will also be presented in a lavishly printed volume.