Annotated Books Online

An interactive research platform for the history of reading

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Outline of presentation

• Introduction and research context (Arnoud Visser)
• The tools themselves (Bert Massop & Tom Tervoort)
• ABO and the research library (Marina Muilwijk)
Who are we?

Network of researchers and librarians:

- Amsterdam
- Gent
- Princeton
- Utrecht (coordinator)
- University College London (CELL)
- York

Funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research
What do we want to know?

Research questions:

• How did readers use their books?
• How did they organize their knowledge?
• Historical focus: 1450-1750
How do we realize this?

- Bringing the evidence together
  - Books with traces of readers: e.g. names, annotations (marginalia), underlining
  - Evidence often inaccessible: rare, fragmented,
  - Evidence dispersed over libraries all over the world

- Sharing knowledge and skills
  - Interactive platform: user-generated content
  - Used in teaching as well as research
  - Open to non-specialists as well
Why is this relevant?

For academic reasons:

- Shift in research from author to reader
- Material side of texts
- Transmission of ideas

On a more general level:

- Revealing parallels in information revolutions
- Contribution to collective research
Technical overview

Frontend

JavaScript / DOM  Ext JS user interface

Backend

HTTP
GET

POST

AJAX + JSON

HTTP

MySQL database

PHP models + controllers

Storage

JPEG tiles
What ABO is not

- Another standard
- Implementation of many standards (yet...)
  - Text Encoding Initiative
  - Stanford Image Interoperability Framework
  - W3C Open Annotation
- A full-fledged metadata store
- Finished
What ABO is

- A novel research aid
- An open platform
  - Anyone can register & contribute
- An open-source project
  - www.github.com/AnnotatedBooksOnline
A digital archive of early modern annotated books

Historical readers left many traces in the books they owned. Names, notes, marks, and underlining provide unique evidence of how generations of readers used their books. Annotated Books Online gives full open access to these unique copies, focusing on the first three centuries of print. Here
A digital archive of early modern annotated books

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Please register to:

- add transcriptions and translations
- upload annotated books

Enter ABO
How the Roman kings lived and died: see Augustine’s memorable chapter 15, in bk 3 of the City of God, including also remarkable comments of Juan Luis Vives. On this point see also the short comment of Aemilius Probus about the most

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Original language
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Qualis Romanorum regum vita, atque exitus fuerit: ecce memorabile Augustini caput 15. libro 3. de Civitate Dei. Cum i...

Tarquinius indignum exsultum.

Omnes primi Romanorum Reges bona, ac validi, praeter Superum: scilicet primi etiam Hebraeorum Reges, optimi et incert...
reges Latin: sepem Romani, magna hominum, and virtue of the Romans see Plutarch’s perceptive and political book, which is very useful for the reader of Roman

the City the things he received from his master Marcus Varro, that exceedingly skilled polyhistor. Also in Greek about Roman

by the same spirit, I also hasten from the fifteen Latin kings to the seven Roman kings, from the Roman

republics, what he did in his investigation of insignificant states or cunning tyrannies, especially in the case of the Roman

the times of the prophets, who many times foretold the coming of the Gentiles at the time when the Roman

ambassadors to neighbouring clans; there were no foreign rituals, except the Herculean
Why the library?

- Support research
- Add value to our collections
- Useful tool for our curators
Issues

• Maintaining the code
• Metadata quality
• Standards
• Collections
What's next

• Addressing issues

• New uses for the tool

• What about preservation?