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Lucia Lichnerová
Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia
lucia.lichnerova@uniba.sk
ORCID 0000-0002-7536-4808

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To Publish, Make Known and Sell
or Promoting Printed Books in the Incunabula Period

Abstract: The study *To Publish, Make Known and Sell* is based on the verified existence of competition tensions between the 15th-century typographers/publishers, related to the absence of functional regulatory tools of book production of the incunabula period. The increase in the number of book-printers within the relatively narrow geographical area, disregard of publishers' privileges, the emergence of pirated reprints, as well as insufficient self-promotion on the book market through introducing novelties had concentrated typographers' attention on devising new tools of securing their triumph in publisher's competition – the so-called book advertisements. The author has analysed 44 promotional posters of the incunabula period from several points of view and attempted to identify their design elements, which on the one hand showed signs of certain standardization, while on the other hand, they were subject to the personal creativity of their creator. She gives a detailed overview of the circumstances of the origin, typographic design, and contents of book advertisements of several kinds within the context of promoting either the existing or planned editions, of one edition or a group of books; specifically focusing on the unique types of advertising. In conclusion, the author cites the circumstances of the extinction of book advertisements related to the rise of the new promotional tool – booksellers' catalogue and submits a bibliography of the book advertisements dating from the 15th century.

Keywords: book advertisements – incunabula period – book trade – Incunabula Short Title Catalogue – Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke

When to print is not enough

After Gutenberg's invention of print, printed books began to spread to other European countries at a record pace. "Book printing soon became a cosmopolitan phenomenon and by 1500, over 1.100 workshops operated in more than 250 European towns"[1]. The book printer's job combined with the profession of a publisher or bookbinder predetermined typographers' role as businessmen trying to sell off their produce. On the one hand, the emergence of new book printing centres allowed access to books to the wider reading public, while on the other hand, it caused legitimate competition concerns on the part of manufacturers. The concerns were, to some extent, regulated by publishers' privileges which, however, did not solve the situation in its complexity – they were granted selectively, unsystematically, and their non-compliance is documented in some period complaints and warnings against pirate printers[2]. When several book printers happened to operate in a small geographical area, their activities led to "excessive book production" and "with no legal intervention, there was no chance for a lot of printers to carry out their activities in such a chaotic environment, and so after a short time they went bankrupt"[3]. Competition tensions were not the only limiting factors. The incunabula printers were limited by technological and economic factors e.g. dependence on individual orders, slow process of constituting readers' communities of printed books, primitive mechanisms of enforcing copyright, etc. Due to this, printed books did not always sell as fast as their publishers would have wished and the question soon arose what to do next with the produce.

Motivated by the wish to accelerate sales of printed books, publishers were made to concentrate their powers on inventing other tools to control competition. Apart from publishers' privileges and warnings against pirates, various marketing strategies related to brand policy came to existence, e.g. signets as quality marks or self-praises of books in their colophons. Several publishers were involved in such activities, e.g. Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer's book printing workshop in Mainz, Aldo Manuzio's workshop in Venice, Ulrich Han's in Rome, Nicolaus Kesler's in Basel, or Nicolas Jenson's in Venice used a signet whose sense, though temporary[4], adequately illustrates A. Manuzio's

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1 P. Voit, *Knihtisk*, [online] https://www.encyklopedieknihy.cz/index.php?title=Knihtisk_ (roz%C5%A1%C3%AD%C5%99en%C3%AD) [accessed 03.03.2021].

2 E.g. Aldo Manuzio of Venice. See his warning: A. Manutius, *Aldus Manutius's Petition against Counterfeiters*, Venice 1502, [online] http://www.copyrighthistory.org/cam/tools/request/showRepresentation?id=representation_i_1502 [accessed 09.03.2021].

3 J. Kostylo, *Commentary on Johannes of Speyer's Venetian monopoly (1469)*, [online] http://www.copyrighthistory.org/cam/tools/request/showRecord?id=commentary_i_1469 [accessed 02.10.2018].

4 Temporary, because signets could also be falsified.

complaint in the form of the warning against the printers/pirates of Lyon. In it, Manuzio warned his customers that "there is no signet identifiable in those counterfeits, ours bear a dolphin and a spiral anchor" and therefore A. Manuzio claimed that it was

> deemed appropriate for the letter to be published so that everyone who is about to buy small books does not get deceived but has the means to consider a comparison and see if those books might have been printed [...] in Venice or in Lyon[5].

By the time other tools to advertise book quality came to existence, colophons had sufficed. The separate space for book praise right in the book itself was used by J. Fust and P. Schoeffer of Mainz in 1457. In the *Psalterium*[6], in which tri-colour black-red-blue print was used for the first time and in which it was attempted to eliminate the job of rubricators, it is stated:

> This copy of the psalter, decorated with beautiful initials and adequately provided with rubrics, was manufactured using the ingenious print technique without using a pen, and to honour God, it was thoroughly completed by Johannes Fust, a citizen of Mainz and by Peter Schoeffer of Gernsheim, A.D. 1457 on the Assumption Day of [...] [i.e. 14 August].

Within the producing policy, tendencies are observed to eliminate, or at least minimize, the competition by bringing to the market the best, the newest, the most beautiful, or the most interesting books – either in terms of form, design, or content. Because of this, new formats, new fonts, design elements, or contents appeared with the purpose of attracting attention or for better orientation in text. To introduce a novelty to the market and to be different from competitive typographers had become a motto of several primary printers. Apart from the Bible projects with new line spacing, other innovations appeared, e.g. Fust-Schoeffer's workshop produced the first printed book of herbs *Herbarius Latinus* (1484), Albrecht Pfister of Bamberg published *Der Edelstein* (1461) – the first book of fiction in German, lavishly illustrated with woodcarvings; in his Bible of 1483, Anton Koberger of Nuremberg presented as a novelty an early form of Schwabach, in Venice, Wendelin de Spira was the first one to use catchwords, colons, question marks, and an A. Apart from Greek font and octavo format, Manuzio introduced more punctuation marks (commas, semi-colons).

However, it turned out that neither providing a book with an interesting typeface or design, nor using trademarks and obtaining publishing privileges were enough to win a good position in publishers' competition due to their not being respected and being falsified. As a consequence, new means of promoting sales of books (their own or purchased for re-sale) accumulating

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5   The warning is published at *Primary...*
6   J. Fust, P. Schoeffer, *Psalterium*, [Mayence] 14 Aug. 1457.

in warehouses began to be sought. Direct distribution, through which readers learned about book quality de facto in person, no longer had the capacity to sell the entire edition. It was more than desirable to implement such a tool in distribution tactics that would make it possible for the already printed books to be advertised prior to their physical contact with a potential buyer. This idea resulted in creating advertising posters that are collectively referred to as the so-called book advertisements. Book advertisements, however, were not the achievements of the era of printed books; the first attempt to introduce this way of advertising for his transcribed manuscripts had been made by Diebold Lauber, a scribe and teacher at Hagenau Castle, in 1450. According to the period information[7], this attempt proved to be successful and seems to have become motivating for incunabula printers as well.

Fig. 1. Manuscript of book advertisement D. Lauber (1450)[8]
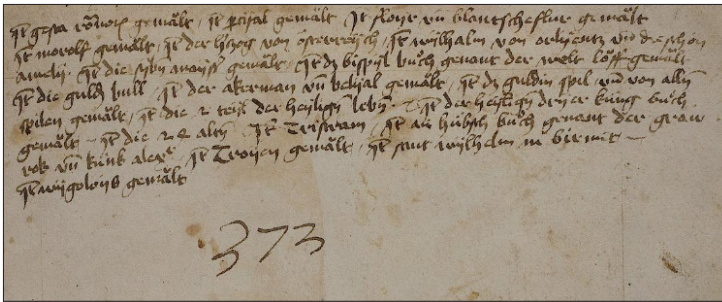
Book advertisements – statistical indicators

By the end of the 15th century, a total of 44 book advertisements[9] published in various languages (Latin, German, Dutch, Italian, English) and various formats had been registered. The frequency of their publications culminated in the 1470s and their use declined at the end of the 15th century. Though book advertisements were published in a single-sheet "poster" form, they were markedly different from the contemporary image of eye-catching large advertisements. Posters were published in an average size of about 20×15 cm,

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7   U. Spyra, M. Effinger, *Werkstatt des Diebold Lauber*, [online] https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/de/bpd/glanzlichter/oberdeutsche/lauber.html [accessed 09.09.2019].

8   Source of figure: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, [online] https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg314/0013, [accessed 09.09.2019], Public Domain – This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights.

9   Number derived from the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, [online] http://www.gesamt-katalogderwiegendrucke.de/ [accessed 01.02.2021] and *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, [online] https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search [accessed 04.05.2021].

the largest ones 39×30 cm, the smallest ones just 5×12 cm. The font was black, rarely black-red (to mark thematic sections) and in most cases, the type of font was unified in the entire advertisement but for the exceptions when printers promoted an exceptional book, printed in a font deserving special attention. When more books were on offer, the posters were typed in one or two columns. If just one book was being promoted, extracts of text, demonstrations of font, decorations, or other unique features of the work given were a must.

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The designs of promotional posters showed undeniable similarities. The form standards were determined by their promoting either just one book (the so-called individual advertisement) or a group of books (the so-called comprehensive book advertisement). Individual book advertisements provided the manufacturers with wider space for creativity and originality and apart from invitations to buy, they also contained a detailed description of the published book and stressed its significance for a potential reader. It must be pointed out that not all kinds of books deserved individual book advertisements. They concerned first editions of yet unpublished books, reissues of well-known works, books published concurrently by other typographers, or when an edition proved to be costly and time-consuming. Comprehensive advertisements showed a higher degree of standards than the individual ones. The basic elements of a typical structure comprised an invitation to buy, an address to the clientele, an indication of advantageous price policy ("largissimus venditor")[10], a list of books, and rarely appeals (e.g. not to pull down the poster, etc.). In addition to permanently printed elements, collective advertisements comprised a handwritten note about the point of sale preceded by the invitation to "come, come in".

Statistical data show that most of the book advertisements were written in Latin (65%), fewer in German (13%), and in but one case adverts in Dutch, English, or Italian appeared[11]. The most ardent promoters of this form of advertising campaigns were Johann Mentelin of Strasbourg and Johann Zainer of Augsburg (both 4 pieces). This form of advertising was quite frequently used also by P. Schoeffer of Mainz, Johann Bämler of Augsburg and Lukas Brandis of Lübeck. Other typographers[12] turned to book advertisements just once or twice; overall this type of campaign was joined by 27 typographers from different European cities. However, this does not make other typographers less important as businessmen – they just used different forms of increasing the

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10 Exact prices were not determined, just notes about a cheap/the cheapest seller.
11 Languages of other, unpreserved advertisements were impossible to identify with certainty.
12 For more details, see the bibliography of book advertisements at the end of the paper.

sales of their produce, e.g. through approaching customers directly at markets and fairs, by founding bookstores at home or branches abroad, etc.

It would be misleading to assume that making a book promoting poster was an ultimate issue of adequate promotion. It was vital to get the book advertisements as close to potential buyers as possible and for this purpose, several persons were employed by publishers. The preserved secondary sources, correspondence, or bibliography of book advertisements indicate that the typographers distributed the advertisements through a network of helpers known as wandering journeymen, agents, buchfürer (traveling booksellers), who were selling books from particular publishers for remission and getting commission from sold books. The advertisements were distributed in different ways which varied from sending them straight to loyal customers, through inserting them in books to mounting them on public places (churches, institution doors, etc.). The entreaty not to pull down the poster of book advertisement by William Caxton[13] at Westminster was thus not uncommon. Booksellers wrote their name and current place of residence on the posters by hand, adding that customers would find carefully edited and very cheap books. Thus we learn that for some time, P. Schoeffer's books used to be offered by journeying booksellers at the "savage inn"[14] ("zum wilden Mann") at Nuremberg, the work of the Strasbourg printer J. Mentelin, *Summa de casibus*, at certain Wilhelm Sautreiber[15] ("zum Wilhelmum Sautreiber"[16]), the 41-line Bible from Heinrich Eggestein could be bought at Strasbourg in the house of Johannis Lüpold, "close to the salt-selling place"[17] ("In dommo Johannis lüpold Circa dommum in qua venditur sal"), but there is also available information about a permanent bookstore of J. Zainer at Augsburg, whose book advertisement[18], bore printed information (instead of information written in hand) stating that the listed editions were stored in the "house by the cross at Günther's nicknamed Zainer"[19]. Journeying

13 W. Caxton, [*Advertisement for: Directorium Saresberiense*], [Westminster about 1477].

14 "Venditor librorum reperibilis est in hospicio dicto zum willden mann", see: O. Duntze, *Verlagsbuchhandel und verbreitender Buchhandel von der Erfindung des Buchdrucks bis 1700*, [in:] *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland*, ed. by U. Rautenberg, Berlin 2010, pp. 203–256.

15 Between 1476–1505 a member of the town council in the Bavarian town of Landshut – found in: C. Primbs, *Das Todtenbuch des ehemaligen Franziskaner-Klosters in Landshut*, [online] https://www.bavarikon.de/object/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10377436?p=55&cq=V%C3%B6ge-l&lang=de [accessed 01.02.2021].

16 This particular is found only on the copy kept in the British Library (IC.570), Advertisement for an edition of Astesanus de Ast "Summa de casibus conscientiae".

17 H. Eggestein, [*Advertisement for: 41-line Bible*], Strasbourg about 1468/70.

18 G. Zainer, [*Advertisement*], [Augsburg about 1471].

19 "Were yemant hye, der zu kouffen begerte etlich teusch und gedruckte bucher, der[en]nam hernach geschriben stat der kom in der schmidlins huss uf dem crucz ... Ginthero genant Zainer von reutlingen..." – The text of the book advertisement obtained from: R. Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, [München] 2011.

booksellers distributed books and advertisements in the nearby region but they also represented the publishers by visiting fairs attended by traders from entire Europe. Based on surviving correspondence[20] among some of the 15th-century publishers it can be stated that fairs were the venues for selling and buying books, while they were also used to negotiate printing contracts, to carry out financial transactions, transport, and delivery of correspondence, e.g. lists of books. At fairs, sellers rented sales points. In Frankfurt, 15th-century fairs were held in the southern part of the town, the so-called book quarters, where booksellers booked chambers and niches where they took the books out of barrels, sorted them, and tried to sell all their stock[21]. At fairs, the activities were carried out by publishers themselves. However, due to lack of time caused by their duties in printing presses, they increasingly engaged their employees and agents of a different kind, e.g. journeying booksellers collaborating with a printing shop, to act for them. They were useful to publishers both when selling books and distributing book advertisements and when acquiring information on demanded and well-selling titles.

<div style="text-align:center">

To make known and to sell
You, who want to buy a really interesting book,
come to the place given below...

</div>

The incunabula printers attempted to secure the smooth running of their craft through advertising for the first time at the turn of 1469/70[22]. The first advertisement promoting a printed book appeared at two typographers' – the Strasbourg publisher J. Mentelin and the Mainz printer P. Schoeffer. Not to invent what had already been discovered was the credo of J. Mentelin as his advertisements[23] quite faithfully copied the canvassing policy from D. Lauber. He promoted the printed work of Astesan de Asta *Summa de casibus* with an analogous formulation: "You, who want to buy a really interesting [book], [...] come into the house [...] and you will find a cheap seller". Mentelin used the Latin advertisement on this one book in three different editions. While in one of them he instigated potential readers to buy ("emere"), in the other two he motivated them to read ("legere"). In the advertisement for the work of principles of conscience, J. Mentelin emphasized the importance of books "for the poor, who do not possess any books, as well as for the rich who have

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20   See e.g. *The Correspondence of Johann Amerbach*, ed. B. Halporn, Michigan 2000.
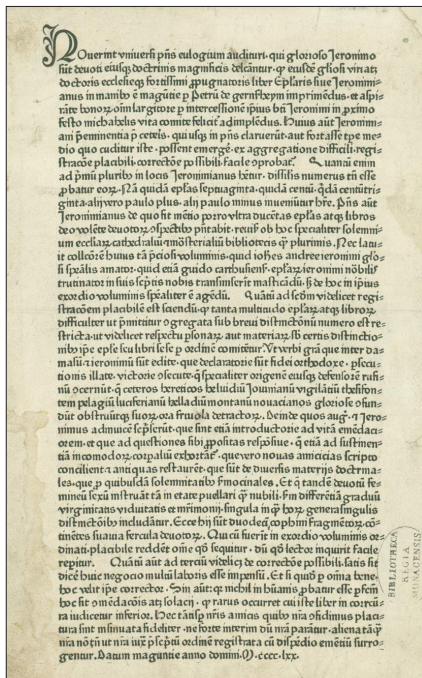
21   I.G. Weuthen, *Die Messepolitik der Verlagsbuchhändler der Bundesrepublik Deutschland auf der internationalen Frankfurter Buchmesse*, Wiesbaden 1984.

22   *Gesamtkatalog...* indicates as the year of issue 1470, *Incunabula...* early 1469.

23   J. Mentelin, [*Advertisement for: Astesanus: Summa de casibus conscientiae*], [Strasbourg early in 1469].

a lot of books", by which he inconspicuously and unobtrusively recommended printed work to anyone. At the same time, similar communication tactics was used by P. Schoeffer of Mainz, though, contrary to J. Mentelin, he decided to promote not one but an entire group of printed books. The bait for buyers began almost identically: "Those who are interested, come to get the below listed, thoroughly corrected books printed in Mainz font [...] at the seller's place of residence". The list of books[24] comprised 21 titles, largely from Schoeffer's press but there also appeared two editions by Ulrich Zell, printer of Cologne, which served as evidence of the then cumulating of book printing and bookselling activities within one profession. Some titles listed in the advertisement poster deserved more attention – the Bible was advertised as bound in parchment, and the typeface used for a psalter was pointed out.

Fig. 2. and 3. Book advertisement P. Schoeffer (1469/70)[25] and J. Mentelin (1469/70)[26]

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24   P. Schöffer, [*Advertisement*], [Mayence about 1469].

25   Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/0010/bsb00101673/images/index.html?fip=193.174.98.30&id=00101673&seite=1 [accessed 01.02.2021]. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

26   Source: Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, [online] https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/4c630bd2–2b61–4722-af0e-ef0876b39b8a/surfaces/0da58598-43e6-4e0c-94ce-e86b-d40dea88/ [accessed 01.02.2021]. Terms of use: CC-BY-NC 4.0, for more information, please see https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/terms/.

When just text is not enough for promotion

The analysis of preserved book advertisements allows us to claim that the most important eye-catcher in advertising was the text itself, while the secondary role was performed by a font. Attempts to use other decoys were encountered only rarely. The first one was the formal aspect of an advertisement which was aimed at attracting attention by using double-coloured print[27], rubrication[28] (red, blue), or by pointing out the remarkable decorative font[29]. In just two cases woodcarvings were used alongside words. The first such advertisement[30] was made by Dutch typographer Gerard Leeu of Antwerp. His typographic production comprises over 220 publications made typographically valuable by their being provided with wood carvings. Despite that G. Leeu only cared for promoting the Dutch translation of a book of popular reading, the so-called Melusine (*Melusina*), "illustrated by the so called Master Bellaert's printing press"[31]. However, the distinguished illustrator was not the reason for the origin of the advertisement – the real reason was much more prosaic. At the time of the origin of *Melusine*, this edition, dated by G. Leeu exactly 9 February 1491, was not the only one on the market. Apart from the Antwerp edition, there were several other editions available at Basel, Strasbourg, Lübeck, Lyon, Toulouse. They were published in various languages – in German, French, and Spanish. This might have helped to make Leeu's situation simpler because this way readers' attention could be targeted at first Dutch translation to which he adjusted the text of the advertisement. He even emphasized the good quality illustrations by a significant master of which one – the wood carving of bathing Melusine – he had placed right on the poster.

Erhard Ratdolt, the Venetian printer, allowed even more space for advertisements through woodcarvings. Before managing, in 1482, to complete Euclides's *Elementa geometriae*, he undertook to promote the work adequately, thus distinguishing his work from other advertising posters by recommending both the works that had been published and those that were being planned in the following way: "This will be printed in Venice by Master Erhard Ratdolt". He even devoted two sides on one sheet of paper to promote his products and apart from using an extract of the text he inserted geometric forms that were to be part of the text (compare figures 4 and 5).

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27 A. Kunne, [*Advertisement*], [Memmingen about 1500].

28 A. Koberger, [*Advertisement for: Schedel: Liber chronicarum*], [Nuremberg about 1493].

29 P. Schöffer, [*Advertisement*]...

30 G. Leeu, [*Advertisement for: Melusine*], [Antwerp about 1491].

31 Jacob Bellaert was the first printer at Haarlem and published predominantly Dutch translations of books with many woodcarvings. It is quite possible that the maker of the woodcarvings, the so called Master of Bellaert's press joined Leeu at Antwerp after 1486 – P. Voit, *Jacob Bellaert*, [online] https://www.encyklopedieknihy.cz/index.php?title=Jacob_Bellaert [accessed 01.03.2020].

Fig. 4. and 5. Extract from the *Elementa geometriae* (1482)[32]
and the book advertisement for this work[33] (E. Ratdolt, 1481)
bearing the information at the bottom that the piece *is yet* to be printed

Sometimes, a few lines or words are enough

When publishers decided to advertise books that had already been printed, they usually used the entire posters (of different sizes), but for the lower part which was kept for handwritten information about the current place of residence of the seller. It was very rare for the decisions on promoting particular works to be transformed into a book advertisement of but a few lines. Nevertheless, it had been done by three printers.

Perhaps W. Caxton was the most economical in promoting his publication of the manual for priests titled *Sacrum piae*. To make potential readers buy his product, five and a half lines on a small piece of paper sufficed in his entreaty for its not to be pulled down ("Supplico stet cedula") At the beginning, he addressed customers and invited them to buy one or two pieces of the work printed in the same typeface as the advertisement (" [enprinted after the brands

of this letter") At the same time he assured that the text was correct and could be acquired cheaply ("good cheape") at Westminster in the printer's house called Reed Pale. One sample of the advertisement bearing a hand-written note in English in the same wording asking for the sign not to be pulled down has been preserved: "Pray, do not pull down the Advertisement". Just a few more lines than those by Caxton were needed for individual book advertisements[34] promoting *De civitate dei extracti* by Johann Schilling. The printer of Cologne recommended the work on fewer than ten complete lines, similarly to the Venetian printer Thomas de Blavis who did not bother much with promoting his edition of *Liber sextus Decretalium* either. To promote[35] it, 15 lines sufficed while he placed the advertisement also in the promoted edition.

According to the information found in the ISTC[36], a book advertisement[37] to promote the so-called *Seven Accounts* was supposed to have originated at Albrecht Kunne's of Memmingen. If this statement were to be trusted, it would be another one of economical advertisement posters – the text printed in German consists of nine lines and 94 words. However, the text analysis shows that it is not a book advertisement and this entry in ISTC[38] is incorrect. More probably than an advertisement it is the most economical summary of the most important historical events (coronations and deaths of significant personages), as was confirmed by the publisher himself: "These Seven Accounts have been summed up here in 94 Latin[39] words nicely made for remembrance".

Fig. 6. Book advertisement W. Caxon (about 1477)[40]

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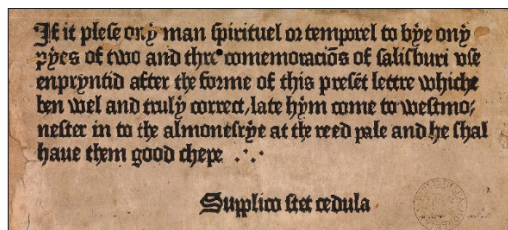
34   J. Schilling, [*Advertisement for: Franciscus de Maioranis, 'Flores Sancti Augustini ex libris De civitate dei extracti'*], [Cologne about 1473].

35   Thomas de Blavis, [*Advertisement for: Bonifac VIII.: Liber sextus Decretalium*], [Venice 1489].

36   *Incunabula...*

37   A. Kunne, [*Advertisement for seven accounts of the year 1486 in 94 Latin words*], [Memmingen about 1486].

38   *Incunabula...*

39   The language was identified incorrectly, it is German.

40   Source: Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, [online] https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/8f9942c0-8d77-4e7c-adf1-fd69fcf0f92f/surfaces/527c9ad7-e7b6-4727-a2b4-5afbc27f0539/ [accessed 01.03.2020]. Terms of use: CC-BY-NC 4.0. For more information, please see https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/terms/.

Fig. 7. Book advertisement A. Kunne (about 1486)[41]
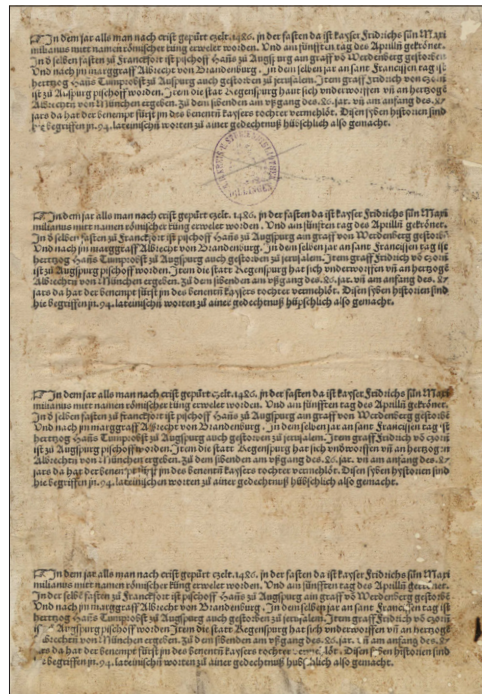
Fig. 8. Book advertisement J. Schilling (about 1473)[42]
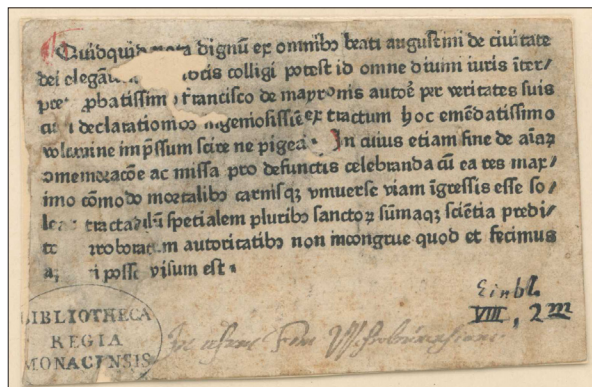
    41 Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblat-tdrucke/330000115_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 01.03.2020].
    42 Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblat-tdrucke/300001985_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 01.03.2020].

This book will be printed if...

Most of the book advertisements were made after the books had been printed and they needed to be promoted properly. However, the business spirit of some publishers responded promptly to another opportunity provided by advertisement posters. Apart from approaching customers with the offers already in existence, they used the book advertisements to get feedback for editions that were being prepared or just planned.

The institution of the so-called "announced books" is to be found in five posters altogether, one of them being the poster by E. Ratdolt mentioned above. However, it was P. Schoeffer of Mainz who became a pioneer of this idea and it had become reality before he completed the expansive work of St. Hieronymus' letters (*Epistolae*) on 7 September 1470. Not only did the printed edition contain more letters than the previous editions (200 altogether), it also demanded a workforce in the area of text editing. This had been undertaken by the Benedictine monk, Adrianus Brielis, who had expanded the printed corpus and "supervised the extensive text corrections during printing"[43]. The colophons of individual editions indicate that P. Schoeffer prepared the special letters for monastic orders, and separately for all Christians. This cannot have been the only reason why P. Schoeffer opted for preventive advertisement[44]. The extensive Latin text taking up the entire poster of the size of 28.4 × 15.2 cm announced that he was to publish *Hieronymus's Letters* that "would be more complete, clearer and more plausible than all the Letters published before". At the same time he begged his potential customers to "wait for the publication of his printed work and not to buy any other meanwhile".

Four years later Johann Regiomontanus, a publisher at Nuremberg between 1473–4 also prepared an advertisement of planned publication. In the title of the book advertisement of 1474[45] he included an appeal in Latin, highlighting the works to be published at the Nuremberg office ("Haec opera fient in oppido Nuremberga Germaniae ductu Ioannis de Monteregio") Regiomontanus sent the advertisement printed in two columns to universities and scholars[46], dividing the offered titles in two groups. The first one comprised 23 titles from other publishers which he had planned to publish, equipped with a note that two pieces, (*Astronomicon* by Marco Manilio and *Theorice Novae Planetarum* by Georg

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43   *Hieronymus*, [online] https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-5334899/?from=salesummery&int-objectid=5334899&sid=ea5b15cc-58d6–4f75-a273-fe5e8ec77386&lid=3&sc_lang=zh [accessed 04.04.2020].

44   P. Schoeffer, [*Advertisement for: Hieronymus: Epistolae*], Mayence 1470.

45   J. Regiomontanus, [*Advertisement*], [Nuremberg 1474].

46   *Regiomontans Verlagsanzeige von 1473/74*, [online] https://www.astronomie-nuernberg.de/index.php?category=regiomontanus&page=verlagsanzeige [accessed 09.04.2021].

von Puerbach) had already been completed. The second group comprised 23 works he was planning to publish (as first editions) depending on the interest of scholars: "The question whether [these works] should be published or not has long presented a conflict between one's modesty and the interests of the scholarly community. The sense recommends considering this". To the first two pieces (calendar and ephemerides) he added that they were "almost complete". The promoted ephemerides with

> celestial positions of 1475–1506 represented an irreplaceable aid for navigating in the early modern age and were used e.g. by Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama; the copy with C. Columbus' notes is kept in Bibliotheca Columbina in Seville[47].

Quite unusual is the poster's ending in which J. Regiomontanus had left space for his contemplation on the significance of book printer's art which should be "blessed by God" and whose implementers could calmly die after completing it because their "descendants would be left such inheritance with the help of which they would be able to liberate themselves from the lack of books forever".

J. Regiomontanus' use of book advertisements for rousing interest in planned publications was followed by the Monastery of SS. Ulrich and Afra located in the southern part of Augsburg. Günther Hägelle[48] stated "that the monastery was the first one in the German-speaking area, where functional scriptorium and printing press operated at once". The printing press had been set up by the abbot Melchior von Stammheim with the plan of active involvement of monks who were to carry out proofreading and compiling the texts while technical issues would be outsourced. Though being discouraged from establishing the printing press due to many risks, M. von Stammheim decided to carry out his idea thus joining the other three printing presses[49] at Augsburg. Though the press operated but for two years, it managed to produce a dozen of Latin and German texts, including many first editions[50]. The work of the medieval 13th-century author, Vincentius Bellovacensis (Vincent of Beauvais) *Speculum historiale*, published in 1474 proved to be a bestseller. The author was a Dominican monk of a Cistercian monastery at the Royaumont Abbey in France and his *Speculum historiale* mapped human history from the creation to the author's

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47   M. Folkerts, A. Kühne, *Regiomontan(us)*, [online] https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz10778.html [accessed 12.05.2021].

48   G. Hägele, *Melker Reform und Buchdruck Zur Druckerei im Augsburger Benediktinerkloster St. Ulrich und Afra*, [in:] *Reformen vor der Reformation: Sankt Ulrich und Afra und der monastisch-urbane Umkreis im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. by G. Drossbach, K. Wolf, Augsburg 2018, pp. 187–204.

49   G. Zainer, Johann Schüssler a J.Bämler.

50   G. Hägele, *Melker...*

own life. However, his main work was *Speculum maius*, while *Speculum historiale* was just one part of his main work. It is known that putting together the entire encyclopaedia took Vincent more than 15 years. During this period he managed to write five versions of *Speculum Historiale*. *Speculum historiale* was published by the printing press at the Monastery of SS. Ulrich and Afra in 1474 but it had been preceded by the book advertisement[51] which was to announce this event in advance and comprised a one-page extract from the planned issue[52]. Currently, this is the only known advertisement that originated in a monastery printing press.

Fig. 9. J. Regiomontanus offer of planned books (1474)[53]
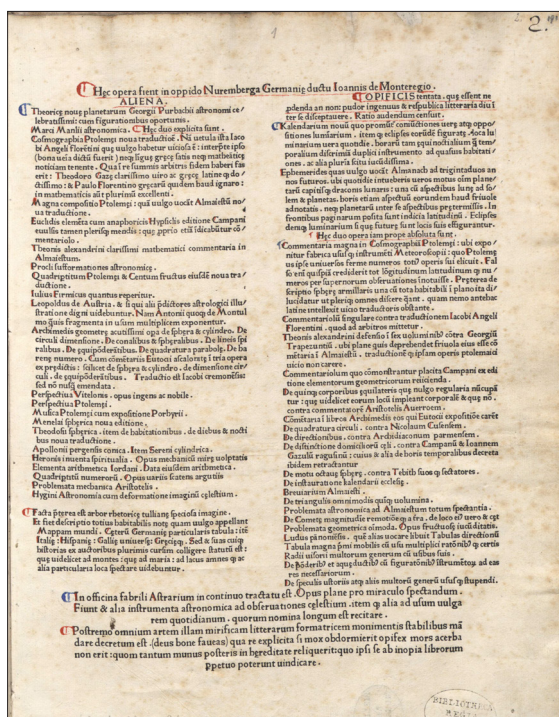
Advertisements promoting new editions had become even more elaborate by Johann Sensenschmidt and Andrea Frisner of Nuremberg. While their contemporaries promoted the works which were just about to be completed

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51   [*Advertisement for: Vincentius Bellovacensis: Speculum vitae*], [Augsburg not after 1474].

52   *Gesamtkatalog...*

53   Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblatt-tdrucke/320001068_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 09.04.2021].

or were at least in preparation, the two Nuremberg printers advanced the issue of seeking demand even further: in the book advertisement[54] of 1475 they reminded readers that not only were they planning to publish the Justinian Codex, but that "in case of satisfactory demand they offered to publish a whole panorama of other Codes". If the contents of the book failed to attract customers, they were to be attracted by the formal aspect making orientation in the text easier thanks to the references in red font. At the same time, the advertisement emphasized that the book would comprise complete titles, capital letters, numbering, and pictures so that "the buyers would not need to be afraid of spoiling their copies with additional rubricating or decorating".

When four people promote the same thing, it is not the same thing

The author, lector, and preacher of Pisa, Rainerius de Pisis, wrote *Pantheologia* in the first half of the 14th century, a book in which he compiled in alphabetical order theological knowledge from documents by older major theologians. During the incunabula period, the encyclopaedia was published six times – particularly by J. Sensenschmidt and Heinrich Kefer at Nuremberg (1473), by G. Zainer at Augsburg (1474), Berthold Ruppel at Basel (not after 1476), A. Koberger at Nuremberg (1474 and 1477) and at last by Hermann Liechtenstein at Venice (1486). It was a large encyclopaedia, according to Dennis Rhodes[55] it was one of the longest books ever compiled during the Middle Ages. More importantly, however, the book is believed to have lost its popularity[56] soon because of a number of editions, as different editions were published within a relatively short scope of time. Four of its publishers used book advertisements to praise the quality of their edition over those of their competitors.

The first advertisement was created right in the year of the publication (1473) by J. Sensenschmidt and H. Kefer[57]. The advertisement was published in a size of a poster of 157x148 cm as an individual book advertisement, probably because it was a huge book, "more than twice larger than any other book so far published by their press"[58]. The other publisher of *Pantheologie* – G. Zainer of Augsburg, who considered the book worth being advertised

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54   Johann Sensenschmidt, Andreas Frinser, [*Advertisement*]. [Nuremberg 1475].

55   D.E. Rhodes, *Notes on the Bibliography od Rainerius de Pisis*, "The British Library Journal" 1996, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 238–241, [online] http://www.jstor.org/stable/42554434 [accessed 12.05.2021].

56   Ibidem.

57   J. Sensenschmidt, H. Keffer, [*Advertisement for the 'Pantheologia' of Rainerius de Pisis*], [Nuremberg 1473].

58   B. Shapero, P.-Y. Guillemet, *75 Incunables from the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, p. 40, [online] https://shapero.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/75_Incunables_BPH.pdf [accessed 10.4.2021].

by an individual advertisement[59] in the immediate year of its publication (1474) responded in a similar way and offered it at "the cheapest seller". B. Ruppel of Basel promoted his edition a year after its publication (1477) though he had not been quite creative when compiling the advertisement. Its text[60] suggests that when compiling it, B. Ruppel committed considerable piracy as he copied the text by J. Sensenschmidt almost word by word, naturally omitting Nuremberg as the place of publication. He emphasized the encyclopaedic nature of the book and its huge size. Contrary to these publishers, Koberger did not think *Pantheologia* was worth an individual book advertisement thus putting it just in a collective advertisement[61] in 1480 in which he had primarily concentrated on promoting the book *Summa theologica* by Antonius Florentius. The edition of *Pantheologia* can thus be found in the form of a brief record among theological works only ("In theologia").

Fig. 10. and 11. Book advertisement by A. Koberger (1480)[62]
and J. Sensenschmidt / H. Kefer (1473)[63]
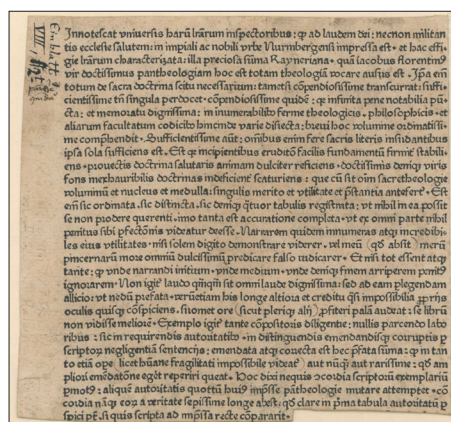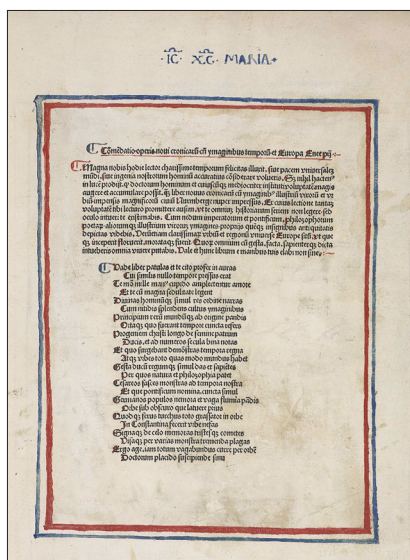
59   G. Zainer, [*Advertisement for: Rainerus de Pisis: Pantheologia*], [Augsburg about 1474].

60   B. Ruppel, [*Advertisement for: Rainerus de Pisis: Pantheologia*], [Basel not after 1477].

61   A. Koberger, [*Advertisement for: Antonius Florentinus: Summa theologiae, sive moralis*], [Nuremberg about 1480].

62   Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblattdrucke/320000788_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 12.05.2021].

63   Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblattdrucke/300001986_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 12.05.2021].

Fig. 12. Book advertisement B. Ruppel (not after 1477)[64]
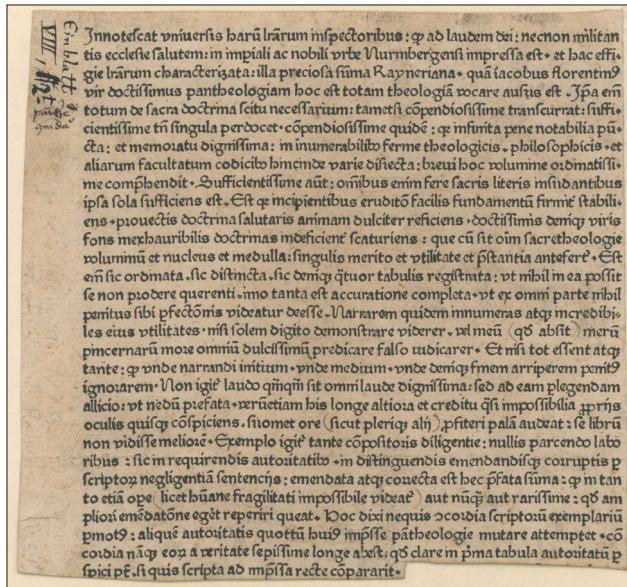
The more, the better?

If an individual book advertisement provided space for the consistent promotion of one book, comprehensive advertisements provided space for promoting more works. Most of them were thus only listed among books on offer, at times without ranking, sometimes within thematic groups, rarely according languages. Though posters provided enough space and each book was given one line (or half-line if the list was typed in two columns), the vacant spaces in some posters may suggest insufficiently used space. We refer to the posters that offered but ten titles. However, we suppose that insufficient promotion of the entire production was not caused by a lack of enthusiasm. It rather suggests that at the time of promotion, there were not many books available. This argument can be supported by the advertisement[65] by J. Bämler of Augsburg from 1473. Though by that year J. Bämler had produced 16 books, his book advertisement promoted just eight titles dating from 1472–73. As some editions were older and the advertisement need not have been

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64 Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblatt-tdrucke/300001986_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 12.05.2021].

65 J. Bämler, [*Advertisement offering for sale eight books printed about 1472–73*], [Augsburg after 9.VIII.1473].

published at the time when all the printed matters of 1473 had been completed, J. Bämler probably promoted what was then in his storeroom. Similarly, in his advertisement of 1471[66], J. Mentelin of Strasbourg could only promote as many books as he had just produced. In the advertisement, he concentrated on new titles, of which there were eight before 1471. That is why the poster promoted just the works by Terentius, Vergilius, Valerius Maximus, *Fortalium fidei* by Alphonso de Spina, the works by Aurelius Augustinus and Hieronymus while the rest had been left out.

On the other hand, as book printing was getting established and publishers were operating longer, both the number of published books and the need to promote as many of them as possible, had increased. It is thus necessary to point out that apart from the growing quantity of publications the publishers/booksellers had in stock, the range of books they had bought at book fairs with the ambition of profitable sales expanded too. For these reasons, book advertisements started to promote "foreign" publications which resulted in 1481 book advertisement[67], promoting over 80 books for sale. Though ISTC[68] and GW[69] show N. Jenson of Venice as the author of the advertisement, it is impossible for him to have printed it/have it printed then as he had died a year before its publication. We admit that he might have prepared it for printing just before his death, however, the fact is that printing was provided by Johann Herbort who was then working in the printing press of the company still bearing the names of N. Jenson and Johann Koeln of Venice. The advertisement served as sales support for over 80 publications from various Italian printing presses, particularly from N. Jenson's office ("precipue ex optima offina magistri Nicolai Jenson"). It offered books printed at Venice – "Libri venales Venetiis impressi". They were mainly Latin editions of Terentius, Plinius, Martialus, Dionisus and Cicero. Due to N. Jenson's and J. Koeln's deaths, the decision making on book distribution and advertisements might have been overseen by Peter Uglheimer, Jenson's friend and partner in his first and second company. Severin Corsten[70] states that: "after Jenson's and Koeln's death, he ran the entire business during the contracted period". This book advertisement is worth the attention also for another reason. Contrary to one-page posters of the 15th century, J. Herbort

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66   J. Mentelin, [*Advertisement for: Augustinus: Epistolae and eight other books*], [Strasbourg about 1471].

67   J. Herbort, [*Advertisement lists over 80 editions from various Italian presses... 'precipue ex optima offina magistri Nicolai Jenson'*], [Venice: Johannes Herbort, de Seligenstadt, not before 24 June or 14 Nov. 1481].

68   *Incunabula...*

69   *Gesamtkatalog...*

70   S. Corsten, *Johann von Köln*, [online] https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz37698.html [accessed 23.05.2021].

distributed the list of 80 publications in more than three sheets printed just on one side. This point might indicate the origin of future book catalogues which were later effectively produced by A. Manuzio of Venice and by other publishers in the 16th century. This development trend is fully documented by the last book advertisement[71] of the incunabula period published around 1500. Its compiler, A. Kunne had used it to promote over 180 titles from theology, law, medicine, astronomy, geography, and classic authors printed in Venice, Nuremberg, and Basel[72].

Fig. 13. Book advertisement of J Herbort's company (Venice, 1480) promoting over 80 titles – part of the advertisement[73]

Conclusion

Promoting the published or planned books through book advertisements ceased before the end of the 15th century. It was as early as during the period of publishing advertisement posters that the first attempt to print an entire list of books for sale in the form of three sheets had been made, the trend successfully adopted by other persons dealing in book distribution in the 16th century. The

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71   A. Kunne, [*Advertisement*], [Memmingen about 1500].

72   L. Hellinga, *Incunabula in Transit: People and Trade*, Leiden-Boston, p. 404.

73   Source: Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, [online] http://bsbipad.bsb.lrz.de/nas/einblatt-tdrucke/300001992_0_r.pdf, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de [accessed 09.03.2021].

booksellers' offer catalogue that differed from book advertisements to larger extent and its content became the new promoting tool. While the authors of book advertisements built their success on various persuasive strategies, the authors of booksellers' catalogues used words economically and concentrated their attention on simple but exhausting lists of books. Though extracts from books, samples of font, or book decorations decreased, particular information that could persuade potential customers more unequivocally was added – contrary to advertisements, catalogues provided information on prices of books on offer. While book advertisements offered "low and cheap books" or the "cheapest seller", booksellers' catalogues largely and clearly determined the price offers. Apart from the numerical value of books their persuasive strategy thus did not concentrate on books, but on prices or on the fact that the price had decreased.

However, book advertisements and their significance had not diminished entirely. The gradual content and design transformation into the title page of the 16th-century books is quite clearly visible to such extent that the page took over most of the functions of advertisements (to catch attention, to persuade about the uniqueness of an author, content, or design of the book) The originally pragmatically simply treated title pages of the incunabula period were supplemented with bibliographical data about the author, the book's title, imprints, etc., as well as commentaries and annotations highlighting the author's credibility or the meaning of the book for a potential reader.

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