

IN MEMORIAM GERARD VAN THIENEN (1939-2015)

The community of paper and watermarks' researchers has lost one of the most prominent researchers of the last decades: Gerard van Thienen.



This youthful, dynamic, sociable and generous man has passed away leaving us a feeling of orphanhood and sadness.

Born in 1939, he studied Dutch literature and Neophilology at the University of Amsterdam, where he graduated as a student of Wytzen Hellinga who was a great book historian. After finishing his studies, he started to work as a curator of the early printed collection of the Royal Library in The Hague (National

Library of the Netherlands). The result of his work was the catalog of incunabula libraries (IDL) Netherlands; the catalog of printed incunabula in the Netherlands and Belgium, a catalog of all the libraries of the world (ILC); and a watermarks database of these incunabula, WILC, which includes 16,000 images of watermarks with their appropriate documentary evidence, characteristics of watermarks and other properties of the paper

The database is of free access and is available on the website of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and on the multilingual Bernstein portal. It aims to be a tool to help dating the incunabula that are undated. Its effectiveness has allowed to be able to specify the dates of 400 over the 1.200 editions of incunabula of the Netherlands.

Gerard's great contribution for researchers in Spanish watermarks is the creation of the database Watermarks in Incunabula printed in Spain - (WIES), which is a provisional website that since November 2008 has 6,000 rubbed watermarks from incunabula printed in Spain of a total of approximately 9,000 that the author collected after visiting more than one hundred libraries from Spain, the United States, England, Munich, Paris, St. Petersburg, Vienna, Portugal, Belgium and Holland. The purpose of the WIES is to provide with closer dates of the Spanish incunabula that are undated, an approximately 500 editions, by comparing similarities of their watermarks with the incunabula which are dated, which are also about 500 editions. It also allows to make comparative studies between the similarity of the dated papers of the Spanish incunabula with the undated incunabula printed in other countries, as it happens in some English incunabula that uses the same type of Genoese papers as Spanish incunabula.

In this brief obituary I can not but express my affection and gratitude to this friend, colleague and teacher. My studies on watermarks were intentionally opened thanks to his support and cooperation. I have told him many times in his long fight against cancer that I prayed for him; Today I toast for him in the same way as he wanted to say goodbye.

M^a Dolores Díaz de Miranda, O. S. B