

Paper One: Markets and Books

Manuscripts and incunables survive for a variety of reasons, but one of the most important is that the survivors were valuable to someone. When we look at a variety of manuscripts and incunables, one question we might ask is, Why did these books survive and not others?

Another curiosity is the relation of the object to its content. Did the size and shape of books have an impact on what was in them? We saw Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*, and noted that its chapters were longer than chapters in medieval or renaissance books. And we noted that each chapter needed to end with a "cliff-hanger," an episode that would get readers to buy the next chapter. We heard how magazines created a need for short essays. And we can see today how publishing markets have lost interest in novellas, epic poems, and others. One question we might ask is, How do markets affect the content of books? Another related question is how the shape of books (size, quality, etc.) affects its contents. Why are there no advertisements in books anymore? How are books sold? (Consider Amazon and Barnes and Noble) What draws people to buy books? And so on.

And finally, we saw how books are sold to various demographics: scholars, students, collectors, and so on. We might ask how the books on our shelves fit those categories. Why, for example, do we buy hardcover books?

Contemplate one of these questions or a related one and write 500 words or so on the relationship between the book as a physical object and its contents.

500 words. Worth 6%, due **23 September**.