

Changes in Rare Books Librarianship: new opportunities for a user-oriented and cooperative approach

Literature review

Luisa Buson

MODULE BP 100

MA/MSc Information Studies
University of Northumbria – Newcastle
Università degli Studi – Parma

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1. Broad topic

The broad topic of the literature review is twofold: rare books librarianship (and librarians), and cooperation and its use in librarianship.

The context focused is the management of rare books and special collections in academic libraries in Italy and in the international arena.

The aim of the literature review is to build the foundation for a research about the present critical issues on Rare Books Librarianship in Academic libraries in term of user-oriented services and new opportunities for cooperation.

Through a survey of the literature of last years, the researcher tries to give answers to questions *about rare books librarians and librarianship*

most frequent topics related, librarians attitudes towards users (and changes if any), specific training, users' perspective *about cooperation*

its meanings, and use; as tool to reach new results and discover unexplored opportunities in a field where individualism and professional jealousy seem to be prevailing.

The study of the existing perspective is the basis for research questions and hypothesis for the building of a new, updated perspective in a local academic context of rare books librarianship.

The literature review can help to establish the context of the topic, and understand the structure of the problem.

The rationale for selecting this particular problem is the researcher's main working activity as coordinator of the Ancient and special Collection Polo in Padua University Libraries System and her commitment in planning future activities and the development of this particular Polo.

2 Rare books librarianship

Library trends devoted an issue to Rare book librarianship in 1957, 1987 and 2003.

In 1987 the topics were: advances in scientific investigation and automation; practices in rare book librarianship; funding; preservation.

The same arguments but with a particular eye on the changes in the profession appeared in the 2003 issue. Areas of recent changes were identified as follows:

Clientele, who use the collections, worldwide audience;

the way money for this field is allocated, more for electronic materials;

new technologies and Internet that have brought new users and a new concern about the preservation of images (Cloonan & Berger, 2003)

Very little has been written about services or cooperation, the focus of the few articles that have appeared is primarily on cataloguing, bibliography, local history, preservation, and conservation.

In fact since the late '70 rare books were mainly seen as objects to be protected, preserved and whose access was full of restrictions as R. Cave well summarizes:

For purpose of conservation the use of rare books has to be restricted to those who really need them; nearly all rare books librarians will impose some restrictions on the use of the collections. (Cave, 1976)

The document-centred approach in rare books librarianship is witnessed by the large amount of references regarding technical, bibliographic, ethics in acquisition policies, cataloguing, preservation, historical aspects of rare books and the nearly absence of literature about the librarians specific requested skills and primary role of services supplier as if rare books staff were physically and psychologically separate in a Sancta Sanctorum: the Treasure Room. In 2004 a conference of Regione Lombardia was dedicated to the librarian profession and one of the papers dealt with “Il Bibliotecario conservatore¹” (Maniaci, 2005), conservation still being the more frequent function attributed to rare book librarians.

The protectionist attitude started to change at the beginning of the 2000 as witnessed by Traister, Byrd, Jones.

In 2000 Traister in a polemical essay asked whether there will be a future for special collections. The problem he stated was that of the inescapable tension between readers who need access and materials that need protection, and that of people who must be 'qualified' to see rare book. He urged the necessity of a fundamental drive toward increasing openness and expanded access.

¹ Conservatore means keeper

Byrd in 2001 wrote an article whose title suggests a transforming situation 'One day it will be otherwise: changing reputation and the reality of special collections' .

A paper appeared in 2002 may be seen as an important turning point in the special collections setting in USA after the activities of a ARL Special Collections Task Force regarding unprocessed special collections materials. Jones (Jones, 2002) states that

instead of being “treasure rooms” open only to a few scholars bearing the proper credentials, special collections now are places from which the cultural treasures of the library are disseminated into the community

In this sentence we find the border between a period document-centred and a new era where *service* and *access* become the key factors in special collections departments too.

Belanger, Allen, Traister (2003), Stam partially agree but foresee still some difficulties in a near future.

Belanger in 2003 commented its previous article of 1991 ‘The future of Rare books libraries’ in which the predictions were generally negative, confirming that the predictions were still relevant. The new priorities being the imperative for the local special collections centers to become regional, national or better international and for the librarians to learn new skills as digital preservation and fund-raising.

The title of an article by S. Allen “*Special Collections outside the Ivory tower*” (Allen, 2003) is very significant both for the recognition of the concept of ivory tower for special collection librarianship and for the new, strong will to get rid of this way of thinking. But in the same article Allen reminds us that each institution housing special collections has its own definition of qualified reader and its own specific requirements for gaining entrance. Also Traister in the same year 2003 stresses the difficulties for people to use rare books even if he recognizes some changing in the librarians’ attitudes. Particularly in the raising interest towards the promotion that seems to outrank preservation: from “to get it, catalogue it, and preserve it” to “get it, catalogue it, and promote it” (Traister, 2003).

- Stam (Stam, 2001) recognising the persistence of the same old problems, suggests some remedies: to call collection not ‘special’ but ‘essential’, and ‘Centers for primary Research’ not Treasure rooms;
- To ask more flexibility from the staff;
- To extend the opportunity to use of finding aids;
- To abolish the words ‘keeper’ and ‘curator’ from the vocabulary;

- To explore collaborative acquisitions to reduce competition among institutions and expand potential use.

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Also Traister stresses the difficulties for people to use rare books for closed or limited access stocks. On the contrary readers must feel invited and welcome to, and comfortable in, the rare book department. Invitation must be active also thanks to tailored reader services (Traister, 2003).

It is important to remember that rare books are valuable as objects because of their age, circumstances of their manufacture, their beauty, illustrations or bindings but patrons tend to look at them than actually read them.

In order to re-gain interest regional and national centers are going to be needed for special collections materials that have lost local support (Belanger, 2003)

Alice Prochaska (Prochaska, 2003) describes in an international perspective the situation of special collections as regards the principal issues of Access, Ownership, and the Electronic revolution. As regards this last topic she stresses the difficulty to sustain collaborative partnership between libraries at regional, national and international levels. Philosophical and ethical dilemmas must be taken into account and librarians need a shared ethic to guide them to care for the shared inheritance of human experience.

The following are some thesis that summarize the recent approach to rare books librarianship:

Problems relating to 'more open access': present versus posterity;

obsession with possession to be overcome;

artifact and the surrogate, new possibilities with through digitalization technologies; uncatologed and inaccessible unprocessed materials;

little coherence of efforts in digital projects.

In the past special collections could be rather isolated but no longer:

the most exciting thing about this golden age is creating partnership with faculty and librarians colleague

So this is the last foresight : Golden age of special collections in the digital age (Albanese, 2005) with examples of big projects for digitalization of thousands of pages of medieval manuscripts by Stanford and Cambridge

2.1 Personnel

Turnover problems in personnel devoted to special collections cataloguing seem to fall into two categories: one appears to parallel the numerical decline of the profession of cataloguing in general; the other trend indicates increased cooperation and collaboration in response to challenges that affect the entire enterprise (Russell, 2004)

To achieve the best of the conservative and the risk of innovative one solution may be job rotation of more staff in and out of special collection (Stam, 2001).

In his most recent edition of *The Academic Library*, Brophy deals with archival and special collections very briefly reflecting on their origins and conservation and concluding that:

“The detailed management of archival /special collections, whatever their origins, requires specialist skills” (Brophy, 2005). No more words about it.

In Italy Baldacchini (Baldacchini, 2003) and Crocetti (Crocetti, 2004) ask for librarians that must be the first researchers of the documents they preserve. In fact their perspective generally is document-centred and the librarian is seen first of all as a conservator .

Even if rare books librarians are identified as conservators, it is now recognised that it is imperative for them to learn new skills as digital preservation and fund-raising but this has in general not diminished the necessity to retain the old skills (Belanger, 2003).

Cloonan and Berger identify some areas of recent change in the profession (Cloonan, Berger, 2003): ‘clientele’ who use the collections, wider audience (in presence and remote), new technologies that demand further and different education and rethinking personnel structures and hierarchies.

To be capable to work cooperatively with all other librarians rare books librarians need to develop user-centred services too. They will be expected to offer value-added services, to be role-confident, and people-orientated: this is the framework in which all librarians are working since at least the last 10 or 20 years accordingly to the different countries.

2.2 University courses

Education and professional training are primary keys to support changing in librarians attitude. But in Italy the university courses offer that is related to rare and ancient books is strongly pushed towards the conservative aspects, as it results from the following examples:

Arezzo: International Master: Conservazione e gestione dei beni culturali

Siena: Master on Studi sul libro antico e per la formazione di figure di bibliotecario

manager impegnato nella gestione di raccolte storiche

Bologna: Master in Conservazione e gestione delle raccolte e collezioni in archivio e biblioteca e in trattamento informatico dei flussi documentali con indirizzo storico e conservativo e indirizzo informatico

Roma : Corsi di diploma per archivisti, Bibliotecari e conservatori di manoscritti

Città del Vaticano: Scuola vaticana di biblioteconomia e Scuola vaticana di paleografia, diplomatica e archivistica

Salerno: Master on Teoria e tecniche per la conservazione e la diagnostica del libro antico manoscritto e a stampa

In USA there are more specific courses as for example in the *University of California-Los Angeles* (UCLA) the California Rare Book School (opened in summer 2006) , with five initial courses, including Book Illustration Processes to 1900, which will be taught by University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Rare Book School pioneer Terry Belanger.

The *Palmer School of Library and Information science* in New York city offer a Rare books and special collections course which include in their optional and recommended topic metadata and web designed and digital libraries.

University of Virginia Rare book school course is strongly oriented towards digital and electronic context as deduced from the following topics: electronic texts and images, electronic texts in XML, implementing encoded archival description, publishing EAD finding aids.

2.3 Reorganization for Special Collections programs.

In Italy special collections departments have rarely been separated from other library 's sectors especially in academic area where rare books are usually disseminated through all the libraries.

A question debated in USA regarding the integration and/or coordination of special collections departments with other library's departments may be interesting to follow for the institutions that have never create functional separation, as in Italy. A specific ALA conference in 1983 tried to choose between integration and coordination. At that time the answer was the acknowledgement of a rising interest in integration or partial integration. In 2000 the question was not whether but how , a decision urged by financial pressures and technological convergence (Grigg, 2000). One of the most important benefits of integration is the implementation of dual organization in which barriers between curatorial units were overcome by lateral cooperation but substantive distinctions and

responsibilities were respected. In a matrix management staff members have multiple interests and responsibilities some exclusive to their home units and some connecting with other parts of the library.

The decline of rare books departments is due not so much to lack of money as to changing priorities within the institutions (Belanger, 2003)

2.4 User's point of view

Although the *protectionist attitude* varies in intensity from one institution to another there is not a general opinion among scholars and other librarians that user needs and service to the users are priorities in the special collection field (Perrault, 1991)

In 1990 Carpenter exposed his scholar's view regarding the types of resource sharing to be improved and they were:

admission of a travelling scholar to a library; provision of a substitute for the original material, and provision of the desired materials by direct or indirect loan.

Until the first years of 2000 the dominant users view is negative and conflictual with the curatorial philosophy of staff who use preservation as an excuse for making materials useless.

Problems of people 'qualified' to see a rare book. Who is qualified, by what standards and by whose? This problem is still present in 2000 (Traister, 2000)

In 2003 Hoftijzer seems to ask for the same old things: providing access to the collections, breaking down the walls that separate librarians from their users, to climb down from their ivory towers.

On the other hand technological advances, digitalization projects seem to be the key to the building of that 'library without walls' that for Carpenter in 1990 was only a "myth".

Hoftijzer, as a scholar, offers other suggestions to librarians in order to learn a more cooperative attitude:

- Curators should share their expertise and experience with others
- Create research groups engaged in the study of particular documents
- Promote the use of special collections in teaching (Hoftijzer, 2003)

In 1999 Gunderheimer had already focussed the attention to the necessity of supporting students in their research: libraries can promote collaboration between scholars and students assistants by providing electronic access to the data. Electronic surrogates help us save fragile objects, time and space disappear as limiting factors in the use of collections

Good service has to do with the ease and timeliness of delivering the special collection materials content the patrons desire (Jones, 2002).

Some examples: grants and awards, staged readings, dealing with the backlogs of un-catalogued and unprocessed materials (Byrd, 2001).

Users are asking a fundamental drive towards increasing openness and expanded access; Readers need access, materials needs protection: here is the inescapable tension at the heart of special collection librarianship (Traister, 2000)

2.5 Conclusion

In 2001 the Keynote Address of ARL conference was a reflection about the state of art of special collections librarianship looking at the year 2001 as a possible turning point (Stam, 2001), the author asked for more access, abolishing the word keeper and curator, diminishing the barriers to student handling and changing librarians vision.

The need for rare books and special collections librarians to reassess where they are and what the future holds is witnessed also in another article of 2001 about the “Reinventing the Treasure room”. Bengtson lists some of the principal activities indispensable to change from a protecting attitude to a use attitude such as teaching, fundraising, research, and IT development (Bengtson, 2001)

Looking at these few articles, at the beginning of the 21th century, the user centred approach seems to start involving the rare books and special collections librarians too.

The gap between users’ needs and the service supply is still large and literature lacks of case studies that may give actual information and news of experiences which witness the state of this changing attitude.

3. Cooperation

A review of the literature reveals that while some terms or expressions are especially used during limited periods, others seem to cross chronological boundaries and persist for many years

cooperative acquisitions (1981)

co-ordinating acquisition policies (1981)

networked libraries (2000)

cross-boundaries cooperation (2000)

collaborative working (2000)

symbiotic collaboration (2000)

collaborative working relationship (2000)

partnership (or collaborative partnership) (1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005)

resource sharing (1981, 1990, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2005)

library cooperation (1988, 1990, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005)

The literature about cooperation, and resource sharing, seems to be very rich and the problem will be that of circumscribing the references in the area of innovative aspects besides the cataloguing and digital ones that appear to be the most frequent.

Since the eighties resource sharing was seen as a push towards user-centred rather than materials-centred service. Examples of activities were directories of resources, ILL, references to document, coordinating acquisition policies, cooperative acquisitions, joint-storage projects and staff education (Sewell, 1981)

Horsnell (1988) listed examples of library cooperation mainly in the field of sharing data: MARC users' group, UK Janet and interchange standards

The publication of a new journal in 1990 with the title of 'Advances in library resource sharing' witnesses the importance since those years of the debate around the concept of resource sharing / cooperation as written in the Introduction of the 1st volume '*Resource sharing is a library concept which is always in practice to some extent, but varies in popularity from time to time*'

MacDougall & Prytherch, in 1991 already distinguished between cooperation as an exchange of things and more strategic concept of coalition that is working together so that to move from an informal supporting role for individual library service to that of a major strategic instrument the organization.

In last years the focus has shifted from the resource sharing of materials and bibliographical records towards a functional, active cooperation that tries breaking down the artificial boundaries between institutions, sectors and domains in order that better services can be provided (Pilling & Kanna, 2002).

Collier and Russell in different contexts consider cooperation as a key of success.

If the next frontier for library will lie in other domains where digital library can have a fundamental impact (Collier, 2004), then surely active cooperation will be a fundamental key to success.

Academic libraries are complex and changing organizations, facing challenges that include reduced staffing, the need to eliminate backlogs and the need for increased cooperation to take advantage of differing expertise. Cooperation and flexibility are key to success (Russell, 2004).

Case studies and actual examples of products resulting from cooperation are reported by Missingham, Langeland and Caidi.

Australian libraries have a long history of sharing resources, they have cooperated to enable their collection to be shared across Australia through a national resource sharing framework: ILL and DD are the keys to resource sharing (Missingham & Moreno, 2005)

Example of cooperation in cultural affairs in Nordic countries: The Literature and Library committee NORDBOK exists to encourage the spread of Nordic literature and to promote library cooperation in the Nordic countries. Nordbok maintains close contact with both the national authorities and the library associations. It's most important contribution to the public library sector takes the form of financial support for a wide range of projects (Langeland, 2005)

The case of cooperation in central and eastern Europe libraries is presented by Caidi (2003) who identifies four cooperation models: artificial cooperation, contested cooperation, directed cooperation, and voluntary cooperation. The research findings suggest that cooperation and resource sharing are at the hearth of the institutional changes taking places in the libraries in Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia (Caidi, 2003).

Wroclaw University Library in its web-site menu lists among other traditional arguments *Library cooperation* in which describes its cooperating activities at local, national, and international level. Cooperation at local level focuses mainly on improving services to the public, giving the public an easy and free access to their collections, on exchange of experiences

Cooperation with Ossolineum Library focuses on sharing their experience in other areas, such as preservation of special collections.

An entire chapter is devoted to cooperation in the last survey on Italian libraries 2005-2006 (Ponzani, Solimine, 2006). Mostly it regards networked town and city libraries and describes different networked service models with examples and case studies. The most frequent cooperative activities are: centralized acquisition, cataloguing, ILL, remote reference, virtual reference desk, policies guidelines, DDL.

3.1 Collaborative working

The collaborative approach is sharing ideas, experience, expertise, personnel and resources with overall coordination, to avoid duplication of effort to share and maximize resources (Matthews, 2005).

Library cooperation should move from an informal supporting role for individual library services to that of a major strategic instrument in the organization through an exchange of things and a coalition of people who work together.

Symbiotic collaboration has transformed the traditionally positive relationship between librarian, technician and user into a proactive, creative partnership that encourages sharing skills but erodes traditional roles. Collaborative working is initiating a process of change in the methodologies towards an explorative perspective (Reid, Foster & Holland, 2000)

Closer cooperation and partnership in the library and information domain is essential if we are to reduce unnecessary duplication of effort, optimize the use of financial and other resources, extend provision in areas not previously or fully covered (Griffiths & Mackay, 2002)

Guidelines and guidance are examples of cooperative tools that together with standards are particularly useful in rare books librarianship for digital imaging, and digital preservation as witnessed in the long list of cases in Tennant (2000).

Cooperation and flexibility are key to success, an understanding of the shared realities of special collections cataloguing across institutions can help make the best of any situation (Russell, 2004)

Incentives to cooperate as rising materials costs and proliferation of materials to purchase have never been particularly successful for the spread of cooperative collection development (Graves & Wulff, 1990).

According to Chang and Jackson cooperation core competencies are Document delivery and ILL (Chang & Jackson, 1996) but in this case it represents a lost opportunity for rare books domain where ILL is impossible by definition. Technology may give an alternative answer with the reproduction on demand or the access to the digital pages of hundreds digital projects managed by libraries.

Examples of special collections departments working together consortially to create database of searchable finding aids: Online Archive of California, The Virginia Heritage project, The Texas Archival resources online (Jones, 2002)

Union catalogues, regional consortia are important focus for resource sharing (access rather than ownership) (Brophy, 2001)

3.2 Opportunities for collaborative digitalization

Early digital projects were models of innovation and cooperation as for example in the following cases:

- at Louisiana State University since 1990 till the birth of Cooperative digital library ventures in 2000. Co-operation and innovation have been at the core of increasing access to the special collections Department (Phillips, 2002)

- California digital library . In partnership with the University of California Libraries and others the CDL develops new ways to build share and preserve digital information through a variety of projects and programs
- OAC online archive of California is a a core component of the California Digital Library. It includes a single, searchable database of finding aids to primary sources and their digital facsimiles , all materials held in libraries, museums, archives and other institutions across California.

According to Ober digital library triumvirate: is made of content, collaboration and technology (Ober, 2001).

Emerging technologies are key to improve access to the collections. The WEB facilitates access to information by removing many of the barriers imposed by limited hours of access, geographical distances (Morales & Rosen, 2000)

Libraries have collaborated extensively within libraries consortia to provide a range of services supporting public access to information and materials.

Morales and Rosen (2000) present the case of University Arizona Library where a federal granted project tries to improve access to special collections both thanks to emerging technologies and the creation of new physical spaces. Still in 2000 the limitation to access was due the following causes: limited hours of operation; incomplete on-line catalogues; absence of finding aids; preservation issues.

Collaborative projects are seen as an essential key to create databases consorcially (Online Archive of California, The Virginia Heritage project, The Texas Archival resource on-line) an for backlog processing project of hidden collections.

3.3 Libraries and other partners

Increased cooperation with neighbouring institutions may also be seen as a tactic to increase the rare book collection's presence and its readership (Traister, 2003).

Partnership and collaboration are ever more necessary not only among libraries but also among other types of institutions, in primis museums and archives.

As the digital content of libraries grows, so also does that of archives and museums. There has been some cooperation between these different kinds of repositories, such as that sponsored by US IMLS grants, but generally practitioners in the respective camps remain isolated. In some countries at national level specific boards have been established at the aim to co-ordinate activities and fundings of libraries, museums and archives.

Some examples:

England

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the lead strategic agency for museums, libraries and archives. MLA was launched in April 2000 as the strategic body working with and for museums, archives and libraries, tapping into the potential for collaboration between them. The new organisation replaced the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) and the Library and Information Commission (LIC), and includes archives within its portfolio. Internally, across the MLA family and with DCMS, the Partnership is committed to a shared vision and shared planning process and one shared corporate plan. Externally, with wider stakeholders, by reinforcing ways of working collaboratively and engaging with partners in the sector at all levels, nationally, regionally and locally to develop and deliver policies and programmes more effectively.

USA

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its mission is to grow and sustain a "Nation of Learners". Through building technological infrastructure and strengthening community relationships, libraries and museums can offer the public unprecedented access and expertise in transforming information overload into knowledge.

In 1998 a survey of Institute of Museum and Library Services highlights the following issues:

Libraries and museums tend to partner with institutions from the same state or city

- Many partnership projects are small-scaled and have budgets under \$5000
- Both libraries and museums tended to partner regionally with institutions from the same city or state, more difficult the collaboration among new partners as public broadcast media as reported in Rodger, Jorgensen, D'Elia in 2005.

In this interesting case study the survey was designed to gather information regarding the current extent of collaborative projects among public libraries, museums and public broadcast media but an interesting result is also the list of the top three reasons for not engaging in collaborative projects:

Lack of staff, lack of financial resources, and preventing diversions of scarce resources from core business

(PACSCL) is the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries that encourages diverse audiences to explore and engage with member libraries' uniquely rich holdings and, through collaboration, strengthens these collections and the institutions that preserve them.

It is the most extensive and diverse collaboration project among a region's libraries and archives in the United States.

Norway

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority is a public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, but it also works across departmental and other administrative boundaries. It has been established on 1st January 2003 following the merger of the Norwegian Directorate for Public Libraries, the Norwegian Museum Authority, and the National Office for Research Documentation, Academic and Special Libraries

In 2000 the annual ELAG Seminar was devoted to the ALM (Archives, Libraries and Museums) convergence with papers and workshops results that described the international situation and the difficulties for this relatively new kind of cooperation.

4. Conclusions

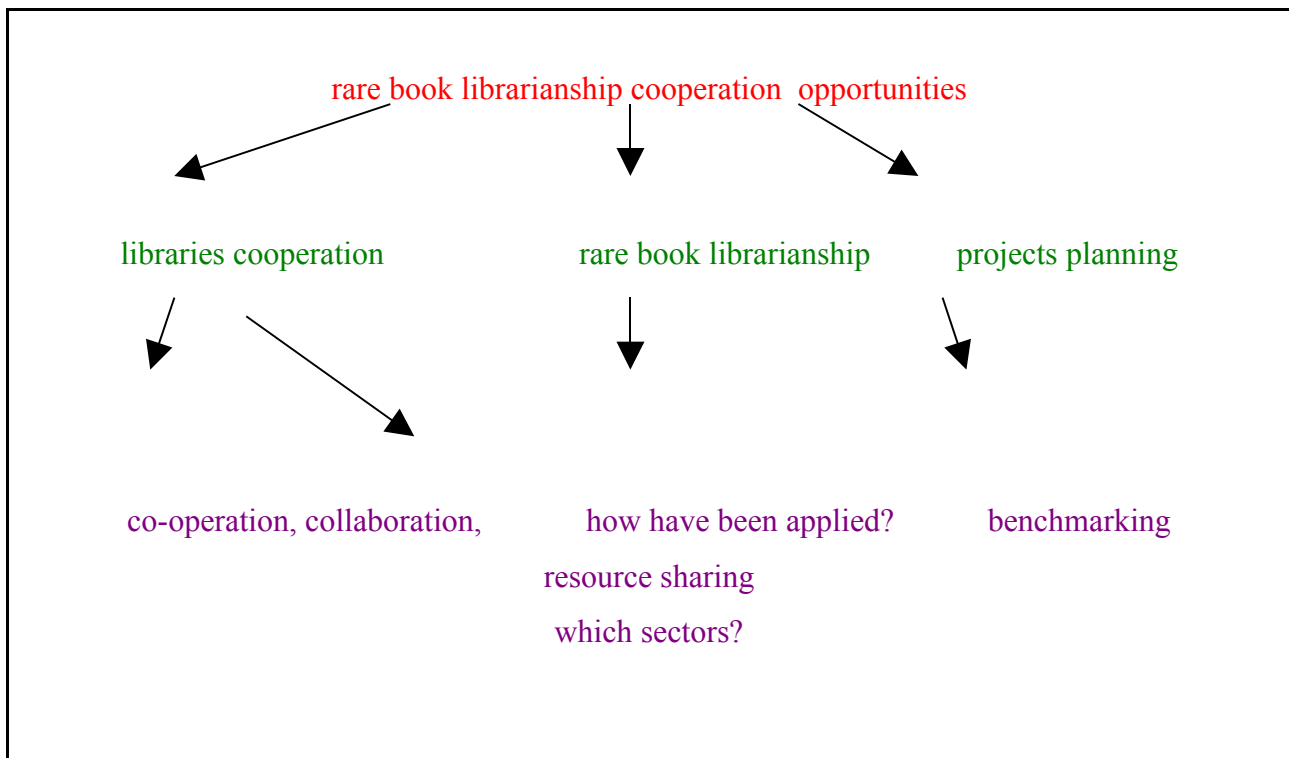
In the field of rare books librarianship strongly emerges a generalized picture of the 'Treasure room' that needs to be open, de-sacralization through the changing of librarians attitude and the integration with other library's departments in order to answer to the users' demands of more access.

Cooperation is still perceived as a success factor both in a resource-sharing context and in the strategic policy processing. Cooperation in the field of rare books librarianship is not much discussed; the few cases have been found by the researcher only by the harvesting of internet resources. In fact usually only institutions web-sites describe internal projects in this field.

A more deep investigation in this sense could give other suggestions and best practices examples.

5. Reflective evaluation

The researcher explored the Italian and English literature of the last 15 years through the use of on-line catalogues, card catalogues and electronic resources on the framework of the following relevance tree:



- Search profile*: a list of keywords, synonyms and concepts have been identified:
- key words*: rare and ancient books, special collections, rare books librarianship, services and rare books, academic libraries and rare books, cooperation / resource sharing in libraries, academic collections
- Primary sources*: (useful for:)
 - Books for a good starting point from which to find more detailed sources
 - journal articles for more concise up-to-date information as to books
 - research reports for best practices and bibliographies
 - theses and dissertations with some caution
 - conference proceedings for latest research and information about current research areas,
 - electronic journals and all other internet resources for the most up-to-date information.
- Preferred age of materials*: 1970 - 2006

- Languages*: Italian, English, French
- Countries*: European countries (especially: Italy, England, Norway, France), and USA

Limitations

The choice of literature sources has been influenced by two main limitations that are languages, and temporal borders plus another 'physiological' limit that is the impossibility to discover and see all printed and electronic references.

Only references in Italian and English have been searched for with some exception for French.

Almost all geographical areas, and far from being exhaustive is limited by the too, both for reasons of time and quantity and for languages difficulties (as for the case of German)

Search strategy: the most important journals and e-journals indexes have been reviewed searching through the keywords previously identified.

The physical browsing of the shelves of two libraries (in England and in Italy) has revealed to be a good starting point to better understand both the most recurring lexical and argument choices in a chronological order with relating authors' names, and the gaps in the research area.

Scanning phase: After the sources have been accessed and retrieved, each work has been looked at closely. A list of those that didn't work has been kept too .

A summary of each piece has been written down by the researcher after the first reading of references. A second reading of these notes has produced a list of themes and topics and an outline

Writing phase: A feature map has been organised to summarize the arguments and put in order the contents into consistent categories through which developing the narrative phase according to a personal process of evaluation and prioritization.

Traps: the researcher didn't avoid the typical traps:

- trying to read everything because of an inevitable growing and enlarging interest in marginal topics that in a first moment seemed to be important, in an excess of serendipity (necessity to maintain the focus and narrow terms)
- reading but not writing, only the choice to write notes and to organize the feature map has been the decisive push to stop reading and to start writing, a phase that has been extremely too much longer than expected.

- Not keeping bibliographic information and consequently to spend a lot of time tracking down the sources (perhaps the worst error for a researcher that is also a librarian).

A last reflection about the result evaluation of the literature review and of the learning process.

These two aspects: quality of the result and learning outcome, are very closely connected because it was the first time for the researcher to undertake this important phase of the research process.

Aims and methodology of the literature review become clear only along the way by a re-iterative and circular process of doing, learning how to do, and modifying what was clearly not adequate in the self-evaluating effort.

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