



Introducing SHARP Features

The book is so much more than that thing with pages sitting on your shelf, or the file on your e-reader. Books are concepts, symbols, the subjects of viral social media posts, set pieces in popular culture, and more. As book historians, we are used to engaging with these objects and ideas in a relatively formal way, via fairly prescriptive formats, such as articles and conference papers. But where do you go if you want to talk about how an anime interprets the development of the codex format and moveable type printing? Or if you want a quick overview of whatâ€™s going on on #BookTok? Or if you want speculation on the reading room practices of Terry Pratchettâ€™s *Unseen University*? Welcome to *SHARP News Features*, the home of book history writing, scholarship, and reflections that are a little bit outside the norm.

SHARP Features is a section that seeks to engage with the concept and consumption of the book and all its facets in innovative ways. As the field of book history continues to embrace â€œ or at least, come to terms with â€œ its place at the intersection of â€œnewâ€• and â€œoldâ€• media, we are able to establish new ways of communicating with wider audiences than ever before, even within our own networks. *Features* will foster more experimental formats and topics that range from the significance of books in pop culture properties to video essays on specific book historical topics and research. The digital format of the section means that image-heavy pieces are not just possible but encouraged, as are pieces that are strictly video.

We hope that the *Features* section will strengthen existing networks within the field, and present new angles for research and communication. It is also an acknowledgement of the fact that the concept of books among people outside the field of book history can be quite far removed from bibliographic reality â€œ by examining these disconnects, we hope to improve the way we communicate our subject area, and increase accessibility to and interest in information about the history of the book.

SHARP Features seeks to publish writing and video essays in an array of categories, with plenty of room for overlap. Our primary categories are:

- **Articles:** reflections on books in media, observations of social media trends, conceptual and/or theoretical analysis, etc. (1000-2000 words)
- **Reviews:** of bookish movies, TV shows, games, etc. (1000-2000 words)
- **Interviews:** with creators, colleagues, influencers, etc. (1000-2000 words)

- **Miscellany:** things that don't fit comfortably into the previous categories (1000-2000 words)
- **Video essays:** unboxing videos, or any of the previous categories in video format (5-10 minutes)

We are currently soliciting pieces for all of these categories! Contact editor Allie Alvis news-features@sharpweb.org with a short (~200-500 words) proposal. We look forward to reading and watching the creative ways you engage with book history!

Features will be publishing quarterly, starting in December with a double-header on games: Matthew Kirschenbaum will offer a review of the Gutenberg board game, and I will be talking to Obsidian's Josh Sawyer, the director of *Pentiment*, a new video game whose aesthetic and plot draw heavily on illuminated manuscripts and early printed books.

Allie Alvis is the Features Editor. They are a rare book cataloguer at Type Punch Matrix, a social media enthusiast (find them as @Book_historia on Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, and YouTube), and an independent book historian. They have an MSc in the history of the book and material culture from the university of Edinburgh, and a second MSc from the University of Glasgow in information management and digital preservation. Allie has published and lectured widely on a variety of topics including 16th century arsenical bookbindings, the significance of the book in the Magic: The Gathering trading card game, the history of bookshelf organization, and the work of English binders Douglas Cockerell and Son. They are honored to be the inaugural editor of this section.

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