We invite submissions for the 21st annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP), to be held in Philadelphia from July 18-21, 2013. The program will take place primarily on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Sponsors include the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, the Chemical Heritage Foundation, and the Library Company of Philadelphia, among other local institutions.

The theme for the 21st annual SHARP conference is “Geographies of the Book.” It can be approached from at least three perspectives:

1. Recent developments that take particular texts and use them to construct multiple histories including, but not limited to, the circulation of books, the plurality of interpretations and uses of the texts, and the forms of domination and resistance within the political and social spheres made possible by the written word.

2. Case studies exploring geographies of books and geographies within books. Geographies of books can refer to the role of the author, the history of publishing (including pirated editions and false imprints), the book trade (circulation of print, within cities, countries, and across continents), and the translation/transformation of texts into other languages, other forms (adaptations, abridgements, epitomes), and other genres (histories into plays, poetry into prose). Or the subject of the geography of reading might also be contemplated.

3. Geographies within books may invoke imaginative topographies or journeys within fictional works, the place of maps and images in travelogues and novels, or the circulation of type and ornament between print shops and cities, and variations or similarities in the regional or national habits of printers and compositors. Tensions between the universal diffusion of printing and its local instantiation might here be considered.

Some potential themes for paper topics might include, but will by no means be limited to:

- Book in Asia, Africa, Europe, Americas (geographies of publishing)
- Printed book (geographies of the text)
- Printing materials and practices (geographies of production)
- Travel (movement through geographies)
- Maps and cartography/GIS (geographies of space)
- Histories of the book (geographies through time)
- Transformations of the text (geographies of appropriation)
- Authorship (geographies of writers)
- Translations (geographies of language)
- Reading (geographies of the reader)
- Fiction (imaginative geographies)

Paper proposals should be no more than 400 words. Proposals on aspects of book history and print culture in any place or period are welcome, but priority will be given to papers that relate in some way to the conference theme. Preference will also be given to proposals for fully constituted panels. Cover letters for panels should indicate the theme and the panel’s participants. Audio-visual requirements must be included in the proposal.
Criteria for Selection of Proposals

Papers presented at SHARP conferences are expected to offer original scholarship and to go beyond a descriptive account of archival or textual materials. Papers should outline the wider implications of research presented. Both the thesis being tested and the conclusions drawn should be clearly stated in the proposal. SHARP prides itself on attracting members from a variety of disciplines, who communicate using language that is accessible to diverse specialists. Proposals should indicate how the paper (or panel) sheds light on some issue, principle, or practice of book history that clearly addresses SHARP’s interests.

Deadline for Submission

The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2012. While membership in SHARP is required of all conference participants, it is not required to submit a proposal. However, all presenters must have current membership before the registration deadline for the conference. The SHARP membership form can be found here: http://www.sharpweb.org/en/about-joomla/membership.html

Philadelphia

The venue of the conference—Philadelphia—embodies the theme through its numerous and diverse libraries, which invite comparisons between places, institutions, collectors, and collections. The University of Pennsylvania has been home to a weekly interdisciplinary history of material texts seminar for nearly twenty years; other area institutions host numerous similar events. PACSCL (Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries) consists of thirty-six libraries and archives and works collectively to enhance access to collections and to provide members and the larger community with ongoing programs and exhibitions. More recently, PACHS (The Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science) promotes scholarly and public understanding of history of science, technology, and medicine, encouraging the use of regional collections through fellowships and programming.

Many Philadelphia and regional institutions will plan tours and other special events before, during, and after the 2013 conference. Attendees will have a wide choice of ways to investigate and explore the resources of this book and manuscript-rich city.

A limited number of travel grants are available for students and independent scholars.

Program decisions will be announced by late January/early February 2013. The program will be mounted on SHARP’s website by early March 2013.

THE FULL DETAILS FOR THE CALL FOR PAPERS AND SUBMISSION FORM ARE AVAILABLE ON THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE:

http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/lectures/SHARP2013/