



Dates of the Leipzig Book Fairs (1758–1860), with Notes on the Book Catalogs

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Abstract

Dates of the Easter and St. Michael's book fairs in Leipzig from 1758 through 1860 are given, correcting previous dates given elsewhere. A brief history of the Leipzig Book Fairs is given in context with the utility of the associated book catalogs, which can be used for obtaining dates of publication for books presented for sale at the fairs.

Introduction

The two yearly book fairs at Leipzig (Easter and St. Michael's) were the top events of the year for book sellers in many European countries during most of the 1700s and 1800s. The Leipzig Book Fair (Fig. 1) had its origins as far back as the 15th century but the book catalogs associated with the fairs did not begin to appear until the 17th century. An earlier book fair was held in Frankfurt, which was the largest one in Germany until 1632 when the Leipzig Book Fair took over with more books being listed. In 1945, the Frankfurt book fair again took over with more book titles and continues to this day as the largest book fair in Germany.

For nomenclatural purposes, the catalogs associated with the Ostermesse (Easter) and Michaelismesse (St. Michael's) book fairs at Leipzig are extremely important as they can sometimes be the only source for the date of publication of a taxonomic work within the year of imprint. Thus, the dates of the fairs where these books were shown and sold can be used to pinpoint the earliest possible date a work was available. Presented here are the dates of the Easter and St. Michael's book fairs at Leipzig for the years 1758 through 1860.

Dating of the Fairs

Dates of the Leipzig book fairs were given in Sayre (1959), which has been followed by other bibliographies

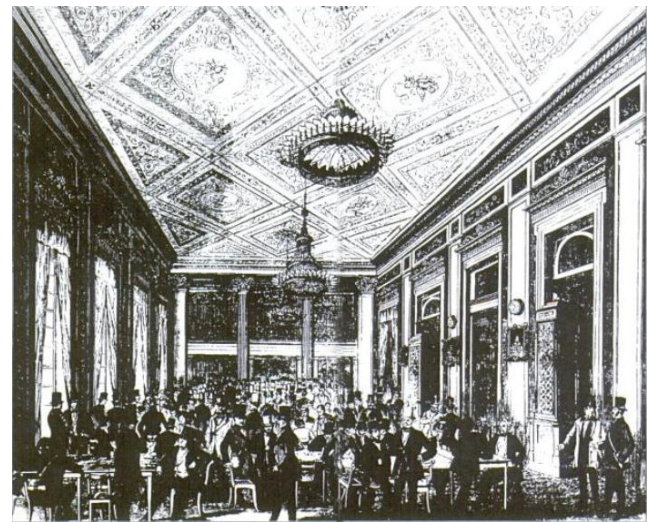


Fig. 1. The Leipzig Book Fair of 1800 (from Niemeier 2001).

(e.g., Stafleu 1962, 1967; Stafleu & Cowan 1976–1988, Evenhuis 1997.). However, these dates have since been shown to be in error. A work on the Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs in connection with the Dutch book trade (Laeven 1992) gave later dates for the fairs based on a history of the book catalogues of the Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs by Borm (1982). Sayre (1959) stated that the Easter Fair at Leipzig took place two weeks after Easter Sunday. Laeven (1992) indicated that the Fair actually took place three weeks after Easter Sunday, coinciding with Jubilate Sunday. Thus, all the dates in Sayre are one week too early. Additionally, Sayre (1959) gave the dates of the St. Michael's fair as taking place on the last Sunday of September. Laeven (1992) indicated that this fair actually took place on the first Sunday following the 29th of September (St. Michael's Day), which changes almost all of Sayre's St. Michael's dates and pushes most into early October. Stafleu (1962), in his study of dates of botanical publications during the years of the French Revolution and basing his dates on

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<http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/dating/sherbornia/index.html>

Table 1. Titles of the book catalogs for the Leipzig book fairs.

Years	Title
1594–1691	Catalogvs vniversalis, hoc est designatio omnivm librorvm, qui hisce nvndinis ... Francofvrtensibus & Lipsiensibvs anno [year]
1692–1711	Catalogvs vniversalis, sive designatio omnivm librorvm, qui hisce nvndinis ... Francofvrtensibvs & Lipsiensibvs anni [year]
1712–1732	Catalogvs vniversalis sive designatio eorvm librorvm, qui hisce nvndinis vernalibvs Francofvrtensibvs et Lipsiensibvs anni [year]
1733–1759	Catalogvs vniversalis, oder Verzeichniß derer Bücher, welche in der Frankfurter und Leipziger Oster-Messe [or Michael-Messe], [year]. entweder ganz neu gedruckt, oder sonsten verbessert, wieder aufgeleget worden sind ...
1760–1787	Allgemeines Verzeichniß derer Bücher, welche in der Frankfurter und Leipziger Ostermesse [or Michaelmesse] des [year] Jahres entweder ganz neu gedruckt, oder sonst verbessert, wieder aufgeleget worden sind ...
1788–1837	Allgemeines Verzeichniß der Bücher, welche in der Frankfurter und Leipziger Ostermesse [or Michaëlismesse] des [year] Jahres entweder ganz neu gedruckt, oder sonst verbessert, wieder aufgeleget worden sind ...
1838–1850	Allgemeines Verzeichniß der Bücher, welche von Michaelis [year] bis Ostern [year] [or bis Ostern [year] bis Michaelis [year]] neu gedruckt, oder neu aufgeleget worden sind ...
1851–1852	Messkatalog. Verzeichniß der Bücher, Zeitschriften u. Landkarten welche von ...
1853–1860	Messkatalog. Ostern [or Michaelis] [year].

those of Sayre (1959), expressed concern that some dates printed in the fair catalogs did not coincide with the fair dates: a few of the Easter book fairs took place before the preface date of the associated catalogue; and one St. Michael's Fair (1791) had a preface date of 1 October. However, when the corrected dates for the fairs are taken into account for those particular years, they coincide perfectly with the dates of the prefaces in the catalogs for those years.

Table 1 gives the correct dates of all the Easter and St. Michael's Fairs at Leipzig from 1758 through 1860 and compares the Sayre dates with those calculated from Laeven's statements.

The fair's book catalogs

Sayre (1959) indicated that the book catalogs for the Leipzig book fair could be traced as far back as 1621; they actually go back to 1594 and were published until 1860. Over time the catalogs changed titles (Table 1) (cf. Figs. 2–3), but they are best known by the title used from 1788–1850: *Allgemeines Verzeichniss der Bücher*.

During the years pertaining to this bibliographic study, the catalogs were printed (for the years 1758 and 1759 by Grossisch in Leipzig; for 1760 through 1860 by Wiedmann in Leipzig) one week prior to each fair and handed out to buyers at the fair (presumably on the first day). Sayre (1959) indicated that some complaints by buyers in various published reviews told of some books being announced as for sale but which in fact were not shown at the fair at all. Stafleu (1962) gave two examples of botanical works that never appeared in the years they were listed in catalogues. However, some of

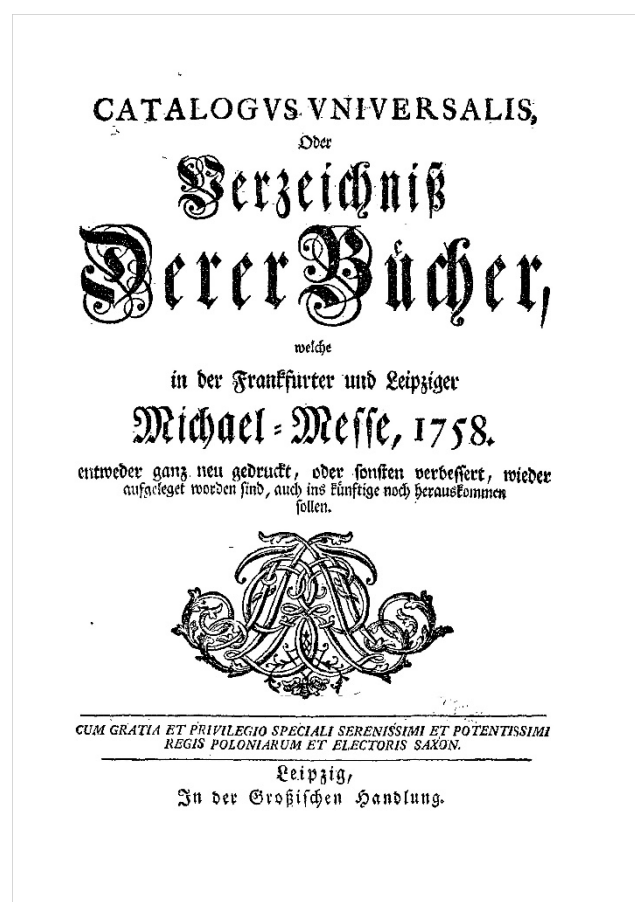


Fig. 2. Title page of the Leipzig St. Michael's Book Fair catalog for 1758.

the histories of these fairs (e.g., Schaefer 1965, Borm 1982, Laeven 1992, Niemeier 2001, Weidhaas 2003) have shown these cases to be extremely rare [as was also indicated by Stafleu (1962)]. The vast majority of books

listed in catalogs were indeed shown at the fair for that year so that virtually all books in the *Verzeichnisse* that have been shown through other evidence to have been published at around that time can be reliably dated from the first day of the Leipzig Book Fair if they are listed and available for sale in the associated book catalog for that fair.

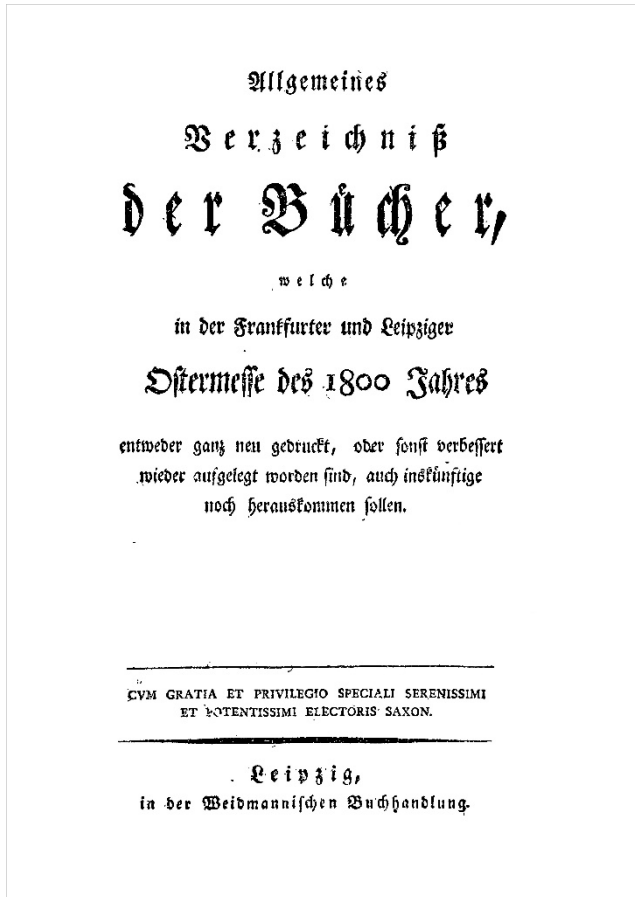


Fig. 3. Title page of the Leipzig Easter Book Fair catalog for 1800.

Acknowledgments

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and St. Michael's book fairs. Thanks also to an anonymous reviewer for corrections that helped improve the paper.

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Table 2. Dates of the Ostermesse (Easter) and Michaelismesse (St. Michael's) Book Fairs in Leipzig (1758–1860)

Easter Fairs			St. Michael's Fairs		
Year	Date of Fairs		Year	Date of Fairs	
	Sayre Date	Actual Date		Sayre Date	Actual Date
1758	9 April	16 April	1758	24 September	1 October
1759	29 April	6 May	1759	30 September	30 September
1760	20 April	27 April	1760	28 September	5 October
1761	5 April	12 April	1761	27 September	4 October
1762	25 April	2 May	1762	26 September	3 October
1763	17 April	24 April	1763	25 September	2 October
1764	6 May	13 May	1764	24 September	1 October
1765	21 April	28 April	1765	29 September	6 October
1766	13 April	20 April	1766	28 September	5 October
1767	3 May	10 May	1767	27 September	4 October
1768	17 April	24 April	1768	26 September	2 October
1769	9 April	16 April	1769	24 September	1 October
1770	29 April	6 May	1770	30 September	30 September
1771	14 April	21 April	1771	29 September	6 October
1772	3 May	10 May	1772	27 September	4 October
1773	25 April	2 May	1773	26 September	3 October
1774	17 April	24 April	1774	25 September	2 October
1775	30 April	7 May	1775	24 September	1 October
1776	21 April	28 April	1776	29 September	6 October
1777	13 April	20 April	1777	28 September	5 October
1778	3 May	10 May	1778	27 September	4 October
1779	18 April	25 April	1779	26 September	3 October
1780	9 April	16 April	1780	24 September	1 October
1781	29 April	6 May	1781	30 September	30 September
1782	14 April	21 April	1782	29 September	6 October
1783	3 May	10 May	1783	28 September	5 October
1784	19 April	26 April	1784	26 September	3 October
1785	10 April	17 April	1785	25 September	2 October
1786	30 April	7 May	1786	24 September	1 October
1787	22 April	29 April	1787	30 September	30 September
1788	6 April	13 April	1788	28 September	5 October
1789	26 April	3 May	1789	27 September	4 October
1790	18 April	25 April	1790	26 September	3 October
1791	8 May	15 May	1791	25 September	2 October
1792	22 April	29 April	1792	30 September	30 September
1793	14 April	21 April	1793	29 September	6 October
1794	4 May	11 May	1794	28 September	5 October
1795	19 April	26 April	1795	27 September	4 October
1796	10 April	17 April	1796	25 September	2 October
1797	12 April	19 April	1797	24 September	1 October
1798	22 April	29 April	1798	30 September	30 September
1799	7 April	14 April	1799	29 September	6 October
1800	27 April	4 May	1800	28 September	5 October
1801	19 April	26 April	1801	27 September	4 October
1802	2 May	9 May	1802	26 September	3 October
1803	24 April	1 May	1803	25 September	2 October
1804	15 April	22 April	1804	30 September	30 September
1805	28 April	5 May	1805	29 September	6 October
1806	20 April	27 April	1806	28 September	5 October
1807	12 April	19 April	1807	27 September	4 October
1808	1 May	8 May	1808	25 September	2 October
1809	16 April	23 April	1809	24 September	1 October
1810	6 May	13 May	1810	30 September	30 September
1811	28 April	5 May	1811	29 September	6 October
1812	12 April	19 April	1812	27 September	4 October
1813	2 May	9 May	1813	26 September	3 October
1814	24 April	1 May	1814	25 September	2 October
1815	9 April	16 April	1815	24 September	1 October
1816	28 April	5 May	1816	29 September	6 October
1817	20 April	27 April	1817	28 September	5 October
1818	5 April	12 April	1818	27 September	4 October
1819	25 April	2 May	1819	26 September	3 October
1820	16 April	23 April	1820	24 September	1 October
1821	6 May	13 May	1821	30 September	30 September
1822	21 April	28 April	1822	29 September	6 October
1823	13 April	20 April	1823	28 September	5 October
1824	2 May	9 May	1824	26 September	3 October
1825	17 April	23 April	1825	25 September	2 October
1826	8 April	15 April	1826	24 September	1 October
1827	29 April	6 May	1827	30 September	30 September
1828	20 April	27 April	1828	28 September	5 October
1829	3 May	10 May	1829	27 September	4 October
1830	25 April	2 May	1830	26 September	3 October
1831	17 April	23 April	1831	25 September	2 October
1832	6 May	13 May	1832	30 September	30 September
1833	21 April	28 April	1833	29 September	6 October
1834	13 April	20 April	1834	28 September	5 October
1835	6 April	13 April	1835	27 September	4 October
1836	17 April	24 April	1836	25 September	2 October
1837	8 April	15 April	1837	24 September	1 October
1838	29 April	6 May	1838	30 September	30 September
1839	14 April	21 April	1839	29 September	6 October
1840	3 May	10 May	1840	27 September	4 October
1841	25 April	2 May	1841	26 September	3 October
1842	10 April	17 April	1842	25 September	2 October
1843	30 April	7 May	1843	24 September	1 October
1844	21 April	28 April	1844	29 September	6 October
1845	7 April	14 April	1845	28 September	5 October
1846	26 April	3 May	1846	27 September	4 October
1847	18 April	25 April	1847	26 September	3 October
1848	7 May	14 May	1848	24 September	1 October
1849	22 April	29 April	1849	30 September	30 September
1850	14 April	21 April	1850	29 September	6 October
1851	4 May	11 May	1851	28 September	5 October
1852	25 April	2 May	1852	26 September	3 October
1853	10 April	17 April	1853	25 September	2 October
1854	30 April	7 May	1854	24 September	1 October
1855	22 April	29 April	1855	30 September	30 September
1856	7 April	14 April	1856	28 September	5 October
1857	26 April	3 May	1857	27 September	4 October
1858	18 April	25 April	1858	26 September	3 October
1859	8 May	15 May	1859	25 September	2 October
1860	22 April	29 April	1860	30 September	30 September