**Print and Prints in the Early Modern World**

Friday 12 March 2021

This CEMS symposium presents new research into early modern print culture, in both textual and visual contexts. Each paper consists of twenty minutes for the speaker, and a further ten minutes for questions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2.00 – 2.10pm  | Welcome |
| 2.10 – 2.40pm  | Lena Liapi (Keele): ‘A Hellish Conspiracy’: News Reportage of the 1696 Assassination Plot |
| 2.40 – 3.10pm | Bruno Tribout (Aberdeen): The Fronde Between Print and Manuscript Cultures: La Rochefoucauld’s Lives |
| 3.10 – 3.20pm | Break  |
| 3.20 – 3.50pm | Adam Morton (Newcastle): Kissing the Pope’s Toe: Memory, Anti-Catholicism and Protestant Visual Culture, 1530-1750 |
| 3.50 – 4.20pm | Helen Pierce (Aberdeen): Caricature Before Caricature: The Etymology of an Insult |
| 4.20 – 4.30pm | Closing remarks |

We will endeavour to keep to time, but papers may overrun slightly.

**‘A Hellish Conspiracy’: News Reportage of the 1696 Assassination Plot (Lena Liapi, Keele University)**

An area of cheap print that has recently received great scholarly attention is the periodical press. The emergence of the periodical press in seventeenth-century England has long been associated with cataclysmic political change. Scholars of the seventeenth-century ‘news revolution’ have seen this period as an excellent example of the connection between the periodical press and the road to democracy. This scholarship has also incorporated Jurgen Habermas’s concept of the ‘public sphere’, notwithstanding significant criticisms of this theory. New research has challenged the dominance of periodical print publications in news provision. The importance of manuscript news media has been stressed, in addition to that of non-periodical news such as pamphlets, ballads, sermons, broadsides and others. Manuscript news have featured in revisionist studies of seventeenth-century politics as more accurate representations of public opinion, as - with the exception of the 1640s-50s and post-1695 period - newspapers were controlled by the state and restricted to foreign, rather than domestic news. More recent research has, however, stressed that manuscript and printed news complemented each other to a far greater extent than such revisionist accounts allow.

This paper will examine the news reportage surrounding the 1696 assassination plot against William III. It will focus on the ways in which newspapers attempted to shape public opinion. Reporting on events taking place in Britain and the rest of Europe, newspapers presented the conspiracy and its aftermath as a religious and a European issue. I intend to show how the news was inflected in different media, but also the ways in which newspapers and manuscript news intersected and influenced one another. Following the recent emphasis on the history of reading, I will examine readers’ response to this news.

**The Fronde Between Print and Manuscript Cultures: La Rochefoucauld’s Lives (Bruno Tribout, University of Aberdeen)**

The rise, on an unprecedented scale, of French political literature during the Fronde – with more than 5,000 pamphlets published in the space of five years – has attracted significant critical interest. But political writing, in the shape of historiography and life-writing in particular, did not stop abruptly at the end of the civil wars. It adapted to the reintroduction of effective state censorship, which rebalanced the production and circulation of print and manuscript materials. While the better researched area of pre-Enlightenment clandestine literature has taught us to question neat divides between print (orthodox) and manuscript (heterodox) cultures, post-Fronde historiography offers further opportunities to investigate the relationship between the two realms, as this paper aims to show using La Rochefoucauld’s life as a case study. Exiled in 1652 for the prominent role that he played in the Fronde, La Rochefoucauld started circulating fragments of his life in the later years of Mazarin’s era, as he was working on the Maxims for which he remains famous. In 1662, an unauthorised version of his life – and the first personal account of the Fronde ever to be published – was eventually printed in Brussels as part of a collection of political pamphlets, to become one of the best-sellers of the century, with eighteen editions appearing before La Rochefoucauld died in 1680, having continued to disseminate differing manuscript versions which competed with the printed books. Considering implications for early modern French political cultures, life-writing and genetic criticism, this paper will look at the making of the 1662 edition, its impact on the continued writing of La Rochefoucauld’s Memoirs, and the relationship between his manuscript and printed lives.

**Kissing the Pope’s Toe: Memory, Anti-Catholicism and Protestant Visual Culture, 1530-1750 (Adam Morton, Newcastle University)**

This paper considers how visual culture can add to our understandings of memory. It does so by considering a commonplace anti-Catholic motif – kissing the pope’s toe – across two centuries of British history.  Epigrammatic of the slavish obedience typifying Roman Catholicism in the eyes of Protestant polemicists, this motif was a central visual short-hand for Papal tyranny in a political sense – over the rights of Christian monarchs in their own realms – and in the spiritual sense – over the souls of individual believers. It is suggested that kissing the Pope’s toe was a highly significant idiom of popular memory which helped to entrench the myth of the Reformation as a dramatic turning point in British history into public consciousness. As a humiliating emblem of Papal tyranny, the trope was routinely followed by an inversion in which Henry VIII and/or Elizabeth I overthrew the Papacy as an act of liberty, and was used throughout the next two centuries to use memory of medieval ‘darkness’ to lobby for political/religious change when fears of ‘popery’ were acute. A significant portion of the paper will thus be devoted to the role of imagery and language as shapers of memory and perception. Conversely, by focusing on the toe-kissing’s appearance in intra-Protestant polemic, this paper will suggest that the image was deeply involved in making the Reformation a protracted and contradictory practice even as it appeared the masked those contradictions in popular memory. Here attention will focus on the ubiquity of this anti-Catholic shorthand, its varied meanings and applications across the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, and its contradictory capacity to be both highly malleable *and* communicate a fixed set of assumptions. By doing so, this paper will demonstrate that approaching culture as a collective – but nonetheless *contentious* – process of memory formation yields a far richer understanding of post-Reformation society than models which see the relationship between Protestantism and culture as antagonistic (‘success’ and ‘failure’).

**Caricature Before Caricature: The Etymology of an Insult (Helen Pierce, University of Aberdeen)**

The later eighteenth century is often referred to as “the Golden Age of English caricature”, when a viciously robust and lively aesthetic of personal insult emerged in printed images via the etching needles of artists such as James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank. Several generations earlier, William Hogarth had regarded caricature as a lazy art of exaggeration and distortion, in contrast to his own more nuanced examinations of the human character in his satirical prints. To Hogarth in the 1740s, contemporary practitioners of caricature such as the London-based artist and print dealer Arthur Pond were introducing English audiences to a new and fashionable, if distasteful, mode of representation with Italianate roots.

But when did caricature actually emerge in England? The first recorded English use of the term caricature dates from the 1670s, as ‘caricatura’, derived from the Italian *caricare*, meaning ‘to load’. However, a rich selection of printed images, similarly based around exaggeration, distortion and personal insult, categorised by scholars including myself using the catch-all label of ‘graphic satire’, appear at moments of political and religious tension (and lapses in control of the press) across the seventeenth century. This paper explores the ways in which caricature, and other descriptors for satirical images, were applied in early modern England, and the relevance of that particular word to examples of satirical art of the period. By thinking about ‘caricature before caricature’, this paper emphasises the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of the development of early modern graphic satire, with both clear connections to, and distinct departures from, its eighteenth-century heyday.