



## Early Modern Book Production: Co-Creative Specialists

Workshop July 8, 2022 – Book of Abstracts

- 09.15 **Matthias Bauer & Angelika Zirker (University of Tübingen)**  
Welcome
- 09.30 **Matthias Bauer, Sara Rogalski, Sandra Wetzel & Angelika Zirker (University of Tübingen)**  
Co-Creativity and Specialization
- 11.00 **Laurie Atkinson (University of Tübingen)**  
Making an Impression: Printers Talking to Authors in Early English Print
- 12.00 **Jean-Jacques Chardin (Université de Strasbourg)**  
The Collaboration of Engravings and Texts in Early Modern Emblem Books
- 14.00 **Heather Anne Hirschfeld (University of Tennessee)**  
Collaborating in Hell: Association, Specialization, and the Underworld in Early Modern Print Culture
- 15.30 **Kirk Melnikoff (UNC Charlotte)**  
Specialization in Early Modern English Publishing: Wills and Inventories as Evidence
- 16.30 **Closing Discussion**

Image: Jan Collaert I. *New Inventions of Modern Times [Nova Reperta]. The Invention of Copper Engraving*, plate 19. Ca. 1600. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (image detail).

**Laurie Atkinson (University of Tübingen)**

### **Making an Impression: Printers Talking to Authors in Early English Print**

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Both the appearance and the text of early modern printed books evidence the multiple agents involved in their production and consumption: the patrons, printers, booksellers, *et al.* who mediated between, and collaborated with, the author and the reader. In England, books from the first decades of the printing trade evoke a sometimes complimentary, sometimes competitive relationship between specialism and collaboration, as different agents asserted their specialist role in making books, while recognizing the material and also the cultural value of amicable collaboration. This paper investigates what printers themselves had to say about their role, and the working relationships that they envisaged with their associates, particularly contemporary authors. I discuss a range of examples of printers talking to authors in their books—from the prologues and epilogues written by England's first printer, William Copland, in the 1470s, '80s, and '90s, to the publications of his successor, Wynkyn de Worde, for which the poet-printer Robert Copland provided imaginative occasional verses. The first half-century of English print demonstrates a marked change in the 'physical' and the 'ideal' production of books, as printers looked to emphasise the specialisation of their role, and the co-creative nature of their products. Where Caxton draws attention to his noble and virtuous author, Anthony Woodville, and presents the printer as his obedient subject, Copland's verses suggest more diverse and less deferential working relationships, partly a reflection of the changing social and commercial bases of the early English book trade, but also suggestive of a growing appreciation of the specialist, co-creative work which it represented.

**Jean-Jacques Chardin (Université de Strasbourg)**

### **The Collaboration of Engravings and Texts in Early Modern Emblem Books**

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In its most common format, an emblem comprises an engraving (woodcut or copperplate) inserted between two textual layers, motto at the top and verse epigram below. It is usually admitted that the emblem creates meaning through the interaction of the various sections, implying that words and images work together to provide a moral lesson (Peter Daly, *Emblem Theory*, 1979). But that is seldom the case. More often than not, engravings and texts seem to have been contingently assembled. Many emblematisers used pre-existing material and endeavoured to give new meanings to codified elements: Francis Quarles's *Emblemes* (1635) drew upon 2 Jesuit emblem books and George Wither's *A Collection of Emblemes*, also dated 1635 recycled Crispin de Passe's woodcuts that had already appeared in Gabriel Rollenhagen's *Nucleus* (1611).

Even when the images and the texts were produced by the same artist, as in Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* (1612), semantic tensions appear between the various components of the emblems. On top of that many emblems contain paratextual notes located in the margins (quotations from classical authors, the Fathers, other emblem collections...), adding other layers of signification.

My paper will address a series of issues: what form of 'dialogue' is established between the various components of the emblem? how can meaning(s) be constructed from the combination of invented and recycled material? what sort of *modus legendi* is implied by an object that appears as a collage of fragments?

**Heather Anne Hirschfeld (University of Tennessee)**

### **Collaborating in Hell: Association, Specialization, and the Underworld in Early Modern Print Culture**

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Adrian Johns, in *The Nature of the Book*, suggests that any account of book production and circulation requires “a topography of the places of printed material.” This paper suggests that such a topography, at least for early modern London, must make room for hell. Looking at a flurry of pamphlets from the 1590s and early 1600s, including *Pierce Pennilesse*, *News from Graves-end*, and *The Black Book*, I consider the ways in which authors, printers, and publishers relied on the resources of the underworld to foster, at both material and imaginative levels, literary associations and relationships. I suggest that writers such as Thomas Nashe, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Middleton delighted in classical models of infernal visitation, using them to orchestrate as well as represent the interpersonal dynamics of print and performance communities. In so doing, I reflect on the capacities of hell not only to signify a moralized realm of infinite punishment but also to serve as a specialized space – literally and figuratively -- for the co-creation of an increasingly complex sense of artistic sociability and collaboration.

**Kirk Melnikoff (UNC Charlotte)**

### **Specialization in Early Modern English Publishing: Wills and Inventories as Evidence**

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Over the past four decades, attention has been increasingly paid to the English book trade agents who financed the thousands upon thousands of titles retailed across early modern England. Inspired by D.F. McKenzie’s sociology of the text, Robert Darnton’s communication circuit, and Peter W.M. Blayney’s essential “The Publication of Playbooks,” scholars have come to see publishing as essential to the transformation and expansion of knowledge and culture in England after Caxton. They have demonstrated too that each publishing operation—operating out of a printing house or a bookshop—followed its own distinctive set of publishing practices. A desire for profit, of course, drove the vast majority of England’s early print publication projects, but it is now understood that other motives (having to do, for example, with a religious, political, or personal agenda) were often in the mix. Even more than printing, early modern publishing was a collaborative endeavor. At every stage, from acquisition to licensing to wholesaling, publishers routinely worked with other stationers as well as with patrons, associates, and family members to identify, manage, and disseminate promising titles. Moreover, the businesses that undertook much of the publishing in this period were usually cooperative enterprises, populated by husbands, wives, widows, sons, daughters, journeymen, and apprentices.

Driven by the need to speculate in the face of an ever burgeoning and diversifying consumer society, specialization was as essential early book-trade practice. A publisher who specialized in a distinctive species of titles put herself into a better position to capitalize on her investments. Booksellers, looking to stock their shops with her speciality, could more readily predict where it might be acquired. Authors, translators, editors, or compilers, looking for a book-trade agent to purchase and disseminate their work, could more readily identify her as a potential investor. And book buyers looking to buy a particular title, could, if the publisher were a bookseller, more confidently assume that they would not be disappointed after a trip to her shop.

In this short paper, I will discuss a few examples of specialization in the early modern English book trade, looking especially at the various ways that collaboration bolstered this important publishing practice. As part of this discussion, I will focus in large part on evidence drawn from probate material. A significant number of stationer wills and inventories survive from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and these in many cases provide essential information about the personnel, investments, trade endeavors, and networks of a number of specialized book-trade businesses. Much of the material that I will consider is drawn from the new Book Trade Probate (BTP) searchable database that will be coming online in the next few years.

The work involved in early modern book production was distributed over a multitude of agents: from scribes, papermakers and typesetters to printers, bookbinders, editors, publishers, and booksellers, a great number of specialists were involved in various “social transactions” (Marotti 1995) between their respective fields. But even before the printed book came into being, other specialists participated in social interaction: compilers of miscellanies as much as individual authors, frequently specializing in specific genres, were involved in poetic exchanges and dialogues, revisions, corrections, and translations. Woodcutters and engravers provided illustrations – specialists who contributed both to the ‘ideal’ and the ‘physical’ production of books.

In our workshop, we would like to learn more about these agents in the “social textuality” (Marotti 1995) of the final printed product. In particular, we want to learn more about the relationship between specialization and collaboration: what did the social transactions between the various agents look like? to what degree do specialization and collaboration exclude or enrich each other? Can the participation of specialists in the production of books be seen as a model of collaboration and co-creativity?

Reference: Marotti, Arthur. *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995.

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### **Workshop Venue**

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen  
Brechtbau  
Wilhelmstraße 50  
72074 Tübingen  
R. 215

### **Concept and Organisation**

Project C05 The Aesthetics of Co-Creativity in Early Modern English Literature  
<https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/160798>

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**Please send a message if you wish to take part via Zoom.**

### **CRC 1391 Different Aesthetics**

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/159334>