



Early Modern Book Production: Co-Creative Specialists Workshop July 8, 2022

The work involved in early modern book production was distributed over a multitude of agents: from scribes, papermakers and typefounders 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?

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