

**Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe.  
Beyond Production, Circulation and  
Consumption**

**Veranstalter:** Universität Erfurt; Universität Utrecht

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More than thirty years ago, Robert Darnton's seminal study 'What is the History of the Book'<sup>1</sup> established a model for the study of networks of production, and the circulation and consumption of books in the Early Modern period. To develop this model, forty scholars in book history met for an international three-day conference titled 'Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe. Beyond Production, Circulation and Consumption' at Friedenstein Palace in Gotha (Thuringia, Germany). The aim of the conference was to critically discuss and open up new perspectives for Darnton's model.

DANIEL BELLINGRADT (Erfurt) opened the conference, arguing that though the core themes of production, circulation and consumption are the cornerstones of Early Modern book culture, they should not be understood as monolithic pillars restricting scholarship to one of these three aspects. To encourage a dynamic discussion, three other aspects should be considered to elaborate on Darnton's model: sociality, spatiality and materiality. Production, circulation and consumption are shaped by the actions and motives of actors in the book trade networks, hence a social element needs to be considered. Furthermore, books are produced in particular spaces and published in various forms and sizes, often reshaped through rebinding and regrouping with other texts after publication. A plenary discussion followed each session, bringing together the panellists and encouraged discussion about the ways in which scholarship from the application of these three aspects. This conference was supported by the German Research Association (DFG), Erfurt University, Utrecht University, Dr. phil. Fritz Wiedemann Stiftung, and the Freundeskreis

der Forschungsbibliothek Gotha. Some papers of the conference have been excluded from this report for the sake of consistency.

The first session and series of papers concentrated on social aspects of book production. ESTHER VAN GELDER (Utrecht) presented a highly specialised project of scientific publishing: Jan Christian Sepp's entomological study of the Netherlands' flora and fauna between 1760 and 1811. The publisher teamed up with Cornelius Nozeman to produce a series of publications that not only depicted insects' habitats but also served to create a community spirit in the Netherlands through the establishment of a common understanding of the Netherlands' domestic plants and animals.

KRISTI VIIDING (Tartu) emphasized the role of women in the Early Modern period and the absence of research on women in the book trade.

PAUL NELLES (Ottawa) studied the development of a universal library based upon Conrad Gesner's 'Bibliotheca universalis', published in Zurich in 1545. Gesner aimed to record all known texts compiling a collection of several thousand bibliographic entries from which the geography of the book can be studied.

GILES BERGEL (Oxford) delved into the particularly difficult production of English genealogies in the 16th and 17th centuries. Diagrams, Porphyrian trees and other illustrative charts were simple to design in manuscript form but printers struggled with representing such figures in print. His conclusion was that no media-transition is ever frictionless, and as a result, book historians should concentrate more on shifts and transitions than on individual works or genres.

The final session was led by DANIEL BELLINGRADT (Erfurt), who further discussed the benefits of analysing materiality, sociality and spatiality. He unravelled another blind spot in book history: the paper trade and its networks. He combined elements of materiality, sociality and spatiality to show that paper dealers were deeply interconnected with book production, book circu-

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Darnton, *What is the History of the Book?*, in: *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 111(3) (1982), pp. 65–83.

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lation and book selling.

The second session was concerned with the myriad ways and different circumstances in which books travelled. They moved from one geographical area to another; they were eagerly collected, preserved and passed on through time by individuals or within certain networks. The assumption of space as being produced or constructed by humans over time was made famous by Henri Lefebvre. Adrian Johns was probably the first to explicitly transfer the concept to book history. Following this interpretation of space as a construction that was used by people over time and cannot be merely understood in its geographical sense, the papers in this session fell into two categories: one analysed socio-spatial relations and the other concentrated on circulation patterns in book production and consumption.

JOOP W. KOOPMANS (Groningen) emphasized the relationship between publishers and artists, by showing their mutual dependency in the production of illustrated newspapers and periodicals. Newspaper publishers were in need of engravers and illustrators who had the creative skills to produce illustrations for their papers. At the same time, these artists needed publishers who wanted them to make illustrations for their periodicals. Furthermore, news editors would have played a central role mediating between publishers and artists to explain and discuss which topics were suitable to depict. BENITO RIAL COSTAS (Madrid) presented a case study of the interactions between printing and kingdom. He researched print issues and peripheries and stressed the importance of analysing infrastructures.

ANDREAS GOLOB (Graz) demonstrated how an Early Modern newspaper publisher could benefit from his connections with book publishers. Review journals such as the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* were vital for the newspaper, as they provided not only constant news on recent publications, but also helped editors to choose the appropriate text to convert into a serial. Through book advertisements, book printers could also attract attention to their stocks and thus benefit from the newspaper. He thereby illustrated the often-circular nature of the Early Modern

book world where content was re-used in a number of media and could as a result appeal to various audiences, depending on availability and the preferences of the reader.

JEROEN SALMAN (Utrecht), co-organiser of the conference, studied the dissemination of popular medical books in the Netherlands and England through book advertisements in newspapers. He ultimately questioned the metanarrative of the development of human knowledge in the medical field which traditionally portrays the most advanced and effective treatments and practices as immediately replacing traditional practices. Most papers in this session underlined the importance of circulation between capitals and densely populated areas.

ANDREW PETTEGREE (St Andrews), however, demonstrated that the onset of the reformation could also redirect circulation allowing regional towns to become centres for circulation. While in the 15th century printing flourished in centres of trade and commerce such as along the Rhine, in Italy, Paris, and Lyon, the rise of Wittenberg to a central position amongst Early Modern printing towns was mainly the achievement of Luther.

The third session dealt with the topic of consumption. The purchase of books offers only very ambiguous evidence with regard to reading and methods of consumption. ARJAN VAN DIXHOORN (Ghent) took on the challenge of examining readership in relation to the cohesion of a collection of texts. An interesting discussion was raised about the order of texts in particular collections and its meaning.

The notion of uniform consumption through reading was challenged by STEPHEN COLCLOUGH (Bangor) through a study of pocket books. Widespread in 18th century Britain, these books served many purposes beyond merely reading, such as recording borrowed items or expenditure. The purpose of these books is often reflected in their physical appearance: bound together and sold as an actual pocket, they could easily be stored in luggage and were protected from abrasion. The physical component, the materiality, played an essential part in many of the papers of the session.

Supplying the Ottoman world with European books in Arabic was discussed by GEOFREY ROPER (London). European presses did not only supply the east; books were exported to the west as well. MICHIEL VAN GROESEN (Amsterdam) explored the practices of book exportation to Brazil and New Netherland between 1620 and 1640 by studying the cargo lists of the West India Company. He showed that exported books were mainly in the hands of the Reformed Church and the Jesuits, who understood this enterprise as a matter of maintaining the colonists' belief. This proved to be a difficult enterprise as in the South American settlements the books often did not reach their intended readers. In New Netherland, an independent book culture slowly emerged with the second generation of settlers, building up a book world that more closely resembled the Dutch market.

The session was closed by NELLEKE MOSER (Amsterdam) who convincingly demonstrated how methods of referencing can be useful sources for analysing miscellanies. They not only help to reconstruct the books that readers must have had on their desks, but also illustrate differences in ideas of readership and ownership.

The international conference sought to bring together book historians and encourage discussion of the world of the Early Modern book and tried to rework the relatively static concepts of Darnton's model. To this end, the aspects of sociality, spatiality and materiality were introduced. While the stages of production, distribution, and consumption are to an extent fairly well researched, the interplay between them remains somewhat unclear and needs further scholarship. The conference identified new avenues for the study of production, many papers discussing marketing, sales, or publishing strategies that producers used in order to reach certain groups of buyers. Much more information can be found in the material object; to a certain extent the object itself should be the main body of evidence. Thus, how to deal with that evidence was one of the underlying questions of the conference. The new approaches of a 'Gotha model' linked the three aspects of book industry closer together, pointing out that scholarship needs to break with artificial

distinctions between production, circulation and consumption and look at networks and practices that not only include official figures or production centres, but also non-official figures, canals and markets as well.

### Conference Overview:

Martin Mulsow (Gotha): Welcome

Daniel Bellingradt (Erfurt): Introduction: Books in motion. Book history in motion

Joad Raymond (London): The European identity of 'Joannis Miltoni Angli Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio', 1651

### Section 1: Production

Chair: Daniel Bellingradt, Erfurt

Kristi Viiding (Tartu) First woman in the process of book production in Livonia: the case of Ursula Krüger and Daniel Hermann, 1614–1615

Esther van Gelder (Utrecht) Creating the nation's nature: Jan Christiaan Sepp's Publishing projects on the flora and fauna of the Netherlands, 1760–1811

Malcolm Walsby (Rennes) Promoting the Counter-Reformation in provincial France: Printing and book selling in sixteenth-century Verdun

Paul Nelles (Ottawa) Conrad Gessner and the making of a universal library

Giles Bergel (Oxford) Signs of Life. European printed genealogical diagrams from 1450–1800

Daniel Bellingradt (Erfurt) Paper networks. Cooperation and competition of paper trade networks in the eighteenth-century

Orlin Sabev (Sofia) Shaping new tastes: Ottoman book market and the Muteferrika Press, 1726–1746

### Section 2: Circulation

Chair: Joad Raymond, London

Benito Rial Costas (Madrid) Printing laws in the fifteenth-century: A case study of the interactions between printing and crown

Johannes Frimmel (Munich) Vienna as focus of the book trade in the Habsburg Monarchy

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in the eighteenth-century

Andreas Golob (Graz) Links between newspapers and the book trade. The case of an early media tycoon in late eighteenth-century Central Europe

Joop W. Koopmans (Groningen) The dynamics between word and image in Dutch News periodicals, c. 1650–1750: Publishers and artists of title prints as a case

Jeroen Salman, (Utrecht) The paradox of scientific progress. The dissemination of popular medical books in the Dutch Republic

*Section 3: Consumption*

Chair: Jeroen Salman, Utrecht

Arjan van Dixhoorn (Gent/Utrecht) A German reader of Mariken van Nieumeghen and other middle Dutch tracts

Stephen Colclough (Bangor) Pocket books and portable writing in Eighteenth-Century England and Wales

Jürgen Beyer, (Tartu) Ecclesiastical manuals in Lutheran countries, c. 1530–1830

Michiel van Groesen (Amsterdam) Books and book ownership in the Dutch Atlantic world

Nelleke Moser (Amsterdam) Tracing the source: ways of referencing in Dutch manuscript miscellanies, 1550–1850

Geoffrey Roper (London) Printed in Europe, consumed in Ottoman lands: the export and reception of European books in the Middle East, 1514–1842

Tagungsbericht *Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe. Beyond Production, Circulation and Consumption*. 28.05.2014–31.05.2014, Gotha, in: H-Soz-Kult 15.09.2014.