

centre for material texts

annual report 2010-II

introduction

The Centre for Material Texts was constituted by the English Faculty Board in July of 2009, and was given a start-up grant towards the creation of a website and administrative support. The Centre is an umbrella organization which brings together those grappling with material textuality from across the humanities, whether their projects are historical, critical, theoretical, editorial, bibliographical or curatorial, in the belief that there is much to be gained from breaching the traditional boundaries of subject and period in this field. As well as overseeing the flourishing History of Material Texts seminar, the Centre holds a variety of colloquia and conferences, and assists with the development of research-grant applications and with the custodianship of web-based materials resulting from research projects. This report summarizes the activities of the Centre in its second year.

I committee

The Centre is run by a Director (currently Jason Scott-Warren) and a committee. In 2010-11 the committee comprised: Abigail Brundin (MML), Sarah Cain (English), Stefano Castelvetti (Music), Mina Gorji (English), Fiona Green (English), Paul Russell (ASNC), Anne Toner (English), Dan Wakelin (English), Tessa Webber (History), and Andrew Zurcher (English). It met twice, in the Michaelmas and the Easter terms.

II website

The website continues to offer an excellent focal point for the Centre. The site sets out the Centre's mission, reports back on CMT conferences and colloquia, advertises news and events, and publicizes the research interests and activities of its members. This year three new items were added to the 'gallery space':

Sebastiaan Verweij, 'Through a Glass Darkly: Collating Donne's Sermons'
Katie Birkwood (St John's) 'The Fred Hoyle Collection at St John's College Library'
Katie Birkwood (CUL), 'Cambridge University Library Incunabula Project'

The blog provides a space for lively commentary on all manner of things: exhibitions, museum displays, new books and articles, conferences and events, and chance finds. Contributions were solicited from several graduate students this year; Lucy Razzall, a PhD student in the English Faculty, won the prize for star blogger. The website also has an intranet 'Members' Forum' for members of the Centre wishing to discuss research questions or to share information with others in the cam domain.

There is now a clear set of links from the front page of the English Faculty website to the CMT website. Our next move must be to publicize the Centre more widely and to encourage other relevant faculties to flag up the existence of the Centre on their web pages.

III events and activities

Seminars

The Seminar for the History of Material Texts, convened by Sarah Cain and Daniel Wakelin, continued to experiment with diverse formats and succeeded in attracting sizeable audiences in 2010-11. The seminars this year were:

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| 14 Oct | Prof. Anne Coldiron (Florida State University) Printers Without Borders: Translation and Literary Transnationalism in the Long Sixteenth Century |
| 11 Nov | Prof. Jim Secord (HPS, University of Cambridge) Nebular Visions: Image and Text in John Pringle Nichol's Architecture of the Heavens |
| 27 Jan | Harriet Phillips (Cambridge): 'Waste Paper: Early Modern Broad-sides as Popular Print'; and Marie Léger-St-Jean (Cambridge): "long for the penny number and the weekly woodcut": Early Victorian Popular Authors and their Readers |
| 24 Feb | Managing curious collections: Stuart Stone (Radzinowicz Library): a visit to the collection of 'banned books' from the Home Office; Katie Birkwood (St John's College Library), on managing the Fred Hoyle Collection of papers, books and other material texts. |
| 5 May | Prof. James Raven (University of Essex): The Sites of Printing and Bookselling in London in the Eighteenth Century |
| 19 May | Reading group on recent work on paratexts and the history of the book.

William Sherman, 'On the Threshold: Architecture, Paratext, and Early Print Culture', in <i>Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein</i> , ed. Baron/Lindquist/Shevlin (Amherst, 2007), 67-81; and

Franco Moretti, 'Style, Inc. Reflections on Seven Thousand Titles (British Novels, 1740-1850)', and Katie Trumpener, 'Critical Response I: Paratext and Genre System: A Response to Franco Moretti', <i>Critical Inquiry</i> , 36 (2009), 134-74. |

Conferences and Colloquia

The main event hosted by the Centre this year was a one-day colloquium entitled 'Eating Words: Text, Image, Food', which took place in Gonville and Caius College on 13 September 2011. Organized by Melissa Calaresu and Jason Scott-Warren, with administrative support from Harriet Phillips, the colloquium set out

Eating Words: Text, Image, Food

a one-day workshop organized by the Cambridge Centre for Material Texts



Some of our most material interactions with texts are grounded in the very food that we eat. Comestibles are eloquent objects; they come stamped with words, festooned with decorative designs, and wrapped in packaging that is at once visually and verbally loguacious. The kitchen has long been a textual domain, regulated by cookery books and recipe collections and noisy with inscriptions on pots, pans, plates and pastry-moulds. This one-day workshop will explore numerous aspects of the relationship between writing, eating and domestic life across a broad swathe of history, in order to illuminate the unsuspected power of words and pictures in a paradigmatically practical locale and to shed light on the textual condition more broadly.

Plenary Speakers: Deborah Krohn (Bard Graduate Centre) & Sara Pennell (Roehampton University)

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 13 September 2011

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;) <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt>

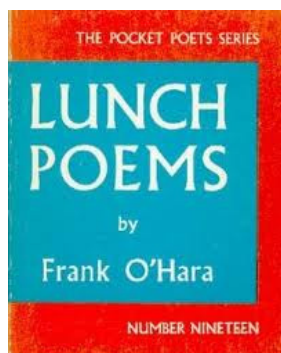
from the observation that the text that can be eaten, or that accompanies eating, might be thought to represent writing at an extreme of materiality. Nonetheless, we readily use words and images associated with eating to describe processes of reading and writing. The colloquium brought together an international line-up of literary scholars and historians of food with the aim of understanding the peculiar confluence of metaphor and materiality that flavours so many of our dealings with the word—whether written or spoken, swallowed or angrily spat out.

The conference opened with a session on 'Culinary Technologies'. Helen Smith (York) brought a rich blend of intellectual influences (Wendy Wall on kitchen literacies, Michel de Certeau on the ancient tricks at work in the scientific laboratory, Bruno Latour on hybrid man-machine organisms) to bear

on the accounts of printing in Joseph Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises* (1683). Examining his references to the use of foodstuffs such as salad oil in the printing house, she suggested that the domestic and typographic arts were close kin. Emma Spary (Cambridge) followed this up with an exploration of the mysteriously elaborate preface to a rather commonplace cookery book entitled *Les Dons de Comus ou les Délices de la Table* (1739). This fine sauce to vile meat was suspected by many to have been penned by Voltaire, and sparked a controversy about the proper language for the dissemination of culinary knowledge. Was cookery a 'scientific' subject, or some species of fine art? Or were such notions made to be ridiculed? Spary ended with a call for food historians to be more attentive to the satirical and parodic motives lurking in apparently straight-faced works.

The second morning slot was divided between two parallel sessions. The first, 'Cookbooks and Method', got stuck into the difficulties of thinking about cookery books as a genre. The two papers were sharply contrasted. Divya Narayanan (Virginia) surveyed a variety of Indo-Persian manuscripts, many of which survive in several richly-illuminated exemplars, and the texts of which defy dating. Highly diverse in terms of their documenting of ingredients, their interest in matters of health and deportment, and their representation of patrons and connoisseurs, these

manuscripts offer an insight into past culinary cultures whilst posing many insoluble questions of origin, transmission and audience. Nathalie Parys (Brussels) set out the methodology of her doctoral project on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Belgian and Dutch cookery books, defined very firmly as books that dealt only with food. Parys's database will offer a longitudinal survey of what people thought they ought to be cooking and eating, and will survey changing trends in the categorization and naming of recipes.



In the concurrent session, entitled 'Studies in Bibliophagy', the speakers discussed brilliant but strange artworks that take the book-eating metaphor literally. Tammy Ho Lai-Ming (KCL) talked about Tom Phillips's *A Humument*, a book (and now an app) that ingests or cannibalizes a Victorian novel (by painting over and otherwise manipulating its text), in order to discover a new, fragmentary narrative within it. This, she proposed, provides a model for a class of neo-Victorian novels that consume their precursors as they come into being. Gill Partington (Birkbeck) described the conceptual artist John Latham's experiments in book eating (and book-burning) in the 1960s. One of these resulted in the reduction of a printed book to a semi-digested pulp; a dispute with a library; and the artist's dismissal from his job.

The morning ended with the first of the day's plenary speakers, Deborah Krohn (Bard Graduate Center). Krohn is currently completing a monograph on the first illustrated cookery book, Bartolomeo Scappi's *Opera dell'arte del cucinare* (printed in numerous editions between 1570 and 1643). This was a work that first caught her eye as a historian of art, but this paper was absorbed with the question of book use, and with making sense of one particularly densely-annotated copy of the Opera. The reader of this copy customized the index and added numerous marginalia, including cross-references to recipes that employed similar ingredients or that led to similar results (the reader had an evident fondness for polpette, or meatballs!). In sum, he thoroughly masters (or digests?) Scappi's text. Drawing attention to the division of labour between stewards and cooks in Italian elite households, Krohn suggested that the reader of this volume belonged to the former group. The book would never have been present in the kitchen, but was part of the broader management of the household.



One of the two afternoon sessions, entitled 'Mealtimes', ranged widely across time and space in search of ingredients. Tessa Webber (Cambridge) explored the practice of reading during meals in monasteries—a practice established, according to one monastic commentator, to prevent the idle chatter and dissension that inevitably arises when people come together to eat. Another spur came from the practical demands of the annual cycle of reading, which could not be completed in the time afforded by the Mass and the Night Office (Matins), and so spilled over into the refectory. The practical demands of juggling

saints' lives, patristic commentaries and gospel homilies, sections of which were read at different times in different parts of the monastery, were considerable, as is evidenced in the margins of the weighty volumes that survive. Sara Thornton (UCL) then shifted the focus from reading to writing, looking at the use of foodstuffs (and in particular jam and pickles) in novels and short stories by Henry James. James on one occasion distinguished directly between those fictions that the public swallowed down like children wolfing jam and those (like his own) that were deemed harder to swallow. In her subtly nuanced account, Thornton argued that James's dealings with food were frequently characterized by greater or lesser degrees of abstraction, and that jam and pickles figured for their ancillary, supplementary quality, their ability to play (like the writer) teasingly around the edges of food's materiality. Supplementation was also at issue in the final paper of the session, as Ruth Cruickshank (Royal Holloway) took us into the entanglement of two phenomena often thought of as quintessentially French—cooking and literary theory. After an introduction surveying the significance of the residual, the undigestible and the leftover in theory, her paper focused on Barthes and Lévi-Strauss, Cruickshank showed how their celebrated analyses of eating have their own leftovers or blind-spots marking the repressed traumas of twentieth-century French history.

The parallel session, 'Banquets of Words', kicked off with Raphael Lyne (Cambridge) on the tendency of classical and early modern literary texts to describe themselves as foodstuffs. Macaronic poetry, mixing lines of Latin and vernacular languages, was named after macaroni; the pastiche was named after the pasticcio, a mixed rustic dish; even the satire seems to take its name from a stew. Speculating that the metaphors of eating words were an example of what George Lakoff calls 'embodied metaphor', which explains a comparatively distant and complex phenomenon (reading) in terms of the more comprehensible and close-to-home (eating), Lyne proposed that these literary foodstuffs owed their existence to their perceived indigestibility, illustrating his case with reference to Thomas Nashe (supposed author of *An Almond for a Parrat* [1590]) and Thomas Coryate (writer of *Coryates Crudities: Hastily Gobbled up in Five Moneths Travells* [1611]). His paper was followed by Erin Weinberg (Queen's, Canada) on the numerous stomach-turning foodstuffs of Shakespeare's play *Titus Andronicus* (printed 1594), from the sizzling human entrails of Act One to the cannibalistic meat-pie of Act Five. Weinberg was particularly interesting on the way in which eating might function metaphorically within the play, as more and more of its characters are consumed by the desire for revenge. Finally we heard Elizabeth Swann (York) on the notion of taste embedded in the commonplace early modern image of the good reader as a bee who sucks honey from the garden of literature. Her paper included a fascinating discussion of the imagined relationships between the composition of ink (made, in part, from the 'galls' that grow on oak-trees) and the humours (including the 'gall' produced by the gall bladder) that determined the physiology of the human body.

In the concluding plenary, Sara Pennell (Roehampton) considered how the pre-modern English kitchen might have furnished a stage-set for 'lived religion'—the practice of piety in everyday life. Her exploration of probate inventories suggested that the kitchen was a significant locale for the keeping of Bibles and other devotional manuals; meanwhile, puritan life-writings suggested how readily providential interpretations could be attached to humble domestic accidents (when a chopping board fell from a high shelf without hurting anyone, God's hand was visible in the

world). Religion was powerfully instantiated in the numerous interlocking cycles of feast and fast, and it was rendered visible in a host of images on wall-tiles and firebacks, pan-handles and prints. Even the salt had apotropaic qualities. Drawing on fragmentary, often recalcitrant evidence, Pennell painted a compelling picture of the kitchen as a sphere inscribed with religious significance.

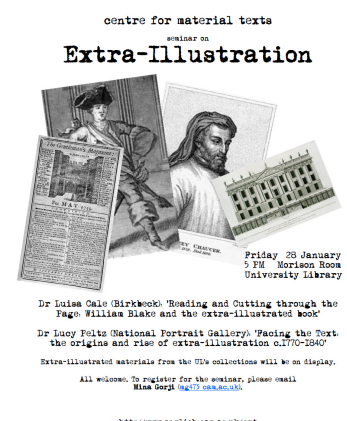
The colloquium was preceded on the evening of 12 September by an experiment in book-eating at Plurabelle Books, where books are sold from an online menu, and it was followed by a dinner which began with alphabet soup and continued in the same vein through to dessert—thanks to the efforts of the Caius chef and Lucy Razzall, who provided numerous highly literate sweet treats.



Other Events and Workshops, with organizers/convenors

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| 26 October 2010 | Start-of-year C M Tea (Jason Scott-Warren) |
| 3 November 2010 | CMT Graduate Training Seminars: preliminary meeting(David McKitterick, Tessa Webber, Jason Scott-Warren) |
| 28 Jan 2011 | Extra-Illustration Workshop (Mina Gorji, Anne Toner) |
| | Dr Luisa Calè (Birkbeck): 'Reading and Cutting through the Page: William Blake and the extra-illustrated book' |
| | Dr Lucy Peltz (National Portrait Gallery): 'Facing the Text: the origins and rise of extra-illustration c.1770-1840' |
| 2 Feb-16 Mar 2011 | Weekly C M Tea (Jason Scott-Warren/Andrew Zurcher) |
| 9 February 2011 | CMT Graduate Training Seminar I (Tessa Webber) |

Exemplar and Copy



- 16 February 2011 CMT Graduate Training Seminar II (Tessa Webber)
- Early Medieval Codicology
- 7 March 2011 CMT Lunchtime Seminar (Jason Scott-Warren)
- Prof. Antonio Sorella (Pescara) and Prof. Michelangelo Zaccarello (Verona)
- ‘Authors Under Press(ure): Italian Renaissance Texts between Printing Constraints and Public Demand’
- 9 March 2011 CMT Graduate Training Seminar III (Elisabeth Leedham-Green)
- Palaeography, 16th-20th Century
- 25 May 2011 CRASSH/CMT half-day workshop (Andrew Zurcher)
- ‘Digital Editing and Digital Editions’
- Speakers: Andrew Webber (German and Dutch), John Rink (Music), Eleanor Robson (HPS), Jason Scott-Warren (English), Jane Winters (Institute of Historical Research), Andrew Zurcher (English)
- 23rd May 2011 Cultures of the Digital Economy Institute (Anglia Ruskin University)/CMT Book-Publishing Histories Seminar Series (Jason Scott-Warren/Leah Tether/UL)
- Professor Jane Taylor (Durham University) on matters of taste in sixteenth-century publishing
- Professor Eugene Giddens (Anglia Ruskin University) on preparing digital editions of early modern literature
- 1 June 2011 Research Project Workshop (Jason Scott-Warren)
- Dr Lauren Kassell (History and Philosophy of Science) on the Simon Forman Casebooks project.
- 8 June 2011 Dr Claire Preston (English) on the Thomas Browne edition.

IV research grant applications

Two research grant bids were submitted by members of the Centre, and making explicit reference to it, in 2010-11.

I National Trust libraries: an untapped resource.

A pilot study of Italian holdings at Belton House, Lincolnshire.

The National Trust owns and manages over 150 properties in the U.K. that contain collections of books, the majority still housed in the buildings where they were assembled and read by their original owners. Between forty and fifty of the libraries in National Trust properties have been described as being of 'major national significance' (Purcell and Shenton, 2005), constituting an unparalleled resource for the study of the history of private book ownership in the United Kingdom. To date, almost no work has been done on most of these collections, although the process of cataloguing the major libraries is underway and ongoing, the results accessible to researchers on the Copac Catalogue as they become available. The proposed project will function as a pilot study, in order to showcase future research potential in these exciting collections, which form an intrinsic part of our national cultural heritage. The project brings together interested parties from a variety of backgrounds to discuss initial findings and collaborate on the way forward in future.

The pilot study will examine the place of Italian books in an English great house library in the wake of the Reformation. The opportunity to map the passage of Italian texts across the English Channel enriches the picture of Italian cultural vibrancy after the Council of Trent, directed outwards towards Protestant nations despite the religious conflicts. It highlights related questions concerning the impact of Italian works within the English context, probing issues of acquisition, reception and dissemination of 'Catholic' models. The holdings of an early modern private library help map the competing influences on that house and family, the works arriving from other contexts, their passage from reader to reader within the household and beyond it. Thus a library, more than simply a collection of books, becomes a repository of the social history of a place. More widely, the findings of this study engage with larger questions about English cultural permeability in the early modern period, explored for example in recent work by Michael Wyatt.

The pilot study will take place at Belton House in Lincolnshire. Belton houses the Trust's second largest library (over 11,000 titles), assembled by successive generations of the Brownlow family, and the collection has now been fully catalogued. 229 works are in Italian, published between 1500 and 1800, across a variety of genres and subjects. Analysis of the Italian holdings will form the basis for two themed workshops and an exhibition of books at Belton House. The first workshop (held at Belton House) will explore the theme of 'Cultural mobility in the early modern library', considering the passage of continental books into English collections, and the social and cultural history contained in these texts. This event will rely on direct access to texts from the Belton collection to guide discussion, and will aim to map the various ways in which the books in National Trust libraries can and should be drawn into the narratives that these houses tell about the families that owned them. The second workshop, hosted by the Centre for Material Texts at the

University of Cambridge, will explore the theme of ‘Great House libraries: an assessment of impact’, and will seek to advance new ideas about the curatorship of great house libraries, in discussion with the curators themselves. An exhibition of Italian books will be held at Belton House showcasing the connections between book and place for a general audience. Finally, a planning meeting will put in place the framework for a larger project, spanning major European languages, and looking at the acquisition and reception of continental books in a number of English great house libraries after the Reformation.

The National Trust is fully committed to this collaboration, and has offered the participation and assistance of its libraries curator, Mark Purcell, who has collaborated in devising the case study, and of David Fitzer, House and Collections Manager at Belton House, and his team to run events there. The Trust will collaborate on a future large research grant application in order to roll the project out to other locations and libraries. Alongside the workshops and exhibition, a book of edited workshop proceedings will be published by a scholarly press, and articles on the project and its findings will be published in the National Trust newsletters and magazine.

The PI for this project is Abigail Brundin, of the Department of Italian. The pilot received funding of £12,000 from the School of Arts and Humanities in October 2011. Further bids have been made to the AHRC.

II Oxford Complete Works of Sir Thomas Browne

A series of bids have been submitted to funding bodies including the AHRC and the ERC for a new OUP *Complete Works of Sir Thomas Browne*. The edition will consist of eight volumes comprising in chronological order all of Browne’s printed works and virtually all of his surviving manuscripts, including letters, notebooks, and composite volumes of papers. This will be the first truly complete edition of Browne, with full textual apparatus, extensive contextual and explanatory commentary, and generous historical and textual introductions.

The results of the AHRC (£780K) and ERC (£900K) bids are pending. The PI for the edition, Clare Preston, made successful bids to the Modern Humanities Research Association and the Newton Trust for a one-year post-doctoral Research Associate, Dr Anthony Ossa Richardson, who will be working from 1 October on transcribing the Browne notebooks, and who will be formally attached to the Cambridge English Faculty. Dr Preston has now gone to a Chair at Birmingham.

V the future

As this report will suggest, the CMT has been very active in its second year, and has continued to grow at a fast pace. Many of the goals enunciated in last year's Annual Report remain in place as ongoing desiderata. We plan to make the Centre more eclectic and interdisciplinary; to offer a wide range of seminars, colloquia and conferences; to offer more bespoke graduate training seminars; to strengthen links between the Centre and the University's library community; and to support the generation of research grant applications in the field of material textuality. At least one of last year's aims has been fully achieved: the Centre has recently acquired its first office space, in the Faculty of English. This will help greatly with the practicalities of administration, as well as providing a home for a library of relevant books, a place to store research grant bids and other documentation, and a workstation for visiting fellows affiliated with the Centre.

In the near future, we plan:

(1) to establish an advisory committee of senior academics from a range of faculties and departments, to oversee the development of the Centre;

(2) to apply for Research Network status within the University;

(3) to seek the approval of the English Faculty and the School of Arts and Humanities for the identification of the Centre as a funding priority, with the aim of finding benefactions for a number of CMT postdoctoral research fellowships. These will be two-year positions and will be tied to three research themes around which the Centre's activities will be focused over the next five years. The role of research fellows will be:

(i) to pursue original scholarship in an area closely related to the broad research theme;

(ii) to convene a series of three to four seminars related to the broad research theme, across two terms of their period of employment;

(iii) to offer and/or co-ordinate two graduate training seminars in their area of expertise per year;

(iv) to compile an online, open-access dossier of materials relating to their research theme, to be hosted on the CMT website as a permanent resource. This dossier would be of high academic quality but would also aim at enhancing public understanding of the subject. It might include (for example) original research papers; book reviews and surveys of existing literature; essays by invited contributors; edited discussions; and online exhibitions.

CMT research themes 2012-17:

the material text in material culture

There has in recent years been an increasing interest in the study of material culture, a fascination with the ways in which our lives shape and are in turn shaped by physical objects and environments. This theme focuses on the interrelations between the

textual and the material, and explores the processes by which texts are produced, circulated and consumed, as objects alongside other objects, or sometimes *on* or *in* objects (since the things we live among are often notable for their loquacity). Our 2011 colloquium 'Eating Words: Text, Image, Food' offers a good example of the kind of interaction between writing and the world of things that a postdoctoral research fellow in this area might be dedicated to exploring; so too does our planned colloquium for 2012 on the theme of 'Texts and Textiles'.

digital editing and digital curation

As soon as academics became aware of the internet, they became excited about the possibilities for new kinds of readerly engagement that it might open up, whether through hypertext editions that would encode multiple versions of variant texts, searchable ebooks that would hugely expedite research, or digital facsimiles that would allow unprecedented access to previously restricted materials. Two decades and many experiments later, it is time to assess how far we have travelled. Is it possible to extrapolate rules for a successful digital edition or curatorial project? What challenges do readers and scholars face in dealing with new technologies, and how might they be overcome? What might curators and editors of films, of music manuscripts, of theatrical ephemera, of cuneiform inscriptions learn from one another? And does the future lie with the increasing capitalization of the digital sphere, or with an efflorescence of open-access initiatives? A postdoctoral researcher appointed under this scheme might, for example, help to develop the English Faculty's 'Scriptorium' project, a digital collection of medieval and early modern manuscript miscellanies.

the library and its publics

This theme focuses on rare book and manuscript libraries—with which Cambridge is unusually blessed—and explores the nature of their relationship with a variety of publics. What purposes will special collections come to serve in the twenty-first century? How might libraries best exhibit their collections and publicize their activities? Do new technologies create fresh possibilities for reaching out both to the academic community and the general public, or do they instead prove a costly distraction from the core business of curating and managing special collections? How might we increase the frequency and scale of academic collaborations with libraries? The Centre's current project on National Trust libraries, initiated by Abigail Brundin in MML, represents the kind of work that might be undertaken by a postdoctoral research fellow under this rubric.