introduction

The Cambridge Centre for Material Texts was constituted by the English Faculty Board in July 2009 to push forward critical, theoretical, editorial and bibliographical work in an increasingly lively field of humanities research. Addressing a huge range of textual phenomena and traversing disciplinary boundaries that are rarely breached by day-to-day teaching and research, the Centre fosters the development of new perspectives, practices and technologies, which will transform our understanding of the way that texts of many kinds have been embodied and circulated. This report summarizes the activities of the Centre in its sixth year.

2014-15 was a comparatively quiet year for the Centre, which meant that it was extremely rather than exceptionally busy. The History of Material Texts Seminar welcomed a lively mix of internationally renowned scholars and early-career academics; among many other things, we got a sneak preview of materials that William Zachs was preparing to use in his 2015 Rosenbach lectures in Philadelphia, and a foretaste from Leslie James of issues at stake in a conference on 'Print Media in the Colonial World' held at CRASSH in April 2015. The Medieval Palaeography Workshop, now in its fourth year, was joined by a series of seminars on Editing the Long Nineteenth Century. The CMT was among the sponsors of a one-day colloquium on Early Modern Visual Marginalia, and put together an exhibition in the Cambridge University Library in May 2015 which helped to publicize this and other recent research activities. A number of members of the Centre were involved in the major UL exhibition on Private Lives of Print: The Use and Abuse of Books 1450-1550, and contributed to the catalogue edited by Ed Potten and Emily Dourish. The exhibition celebrated the completion of the UL’s project to catalogue its incunables and offered a fascinating exploration of bibliographic afterlives. CMT members also pioneered a Part II English Literature paper entitled ‘Material Renaissance’, and helped to formulate plans for the proposed Institute for Global Palaeographies.

I committee

The Centre is run by a Director (currently Jason Scott-Warren) and a Steering Committee. In 2014-15 the committee comprised: Anne Alexander (Digital Humanities Network), Abigail Brundin (MML), Sarah Cain (English), Stefano
Castelvecchi (Music), Orietta da Rold (English), Mina Gorji (English), Fiona Green (English), Alison Knight (CRASH), Hester Lees-Jeffries (English), Stella Panayotova (Fitzwilliam Museum), Ed Potten (University Library), Paul Russell (ASNC), Anne Toner (English), Tessa Webber (History) and Andrew Zurcher (English). At the end of the year Ed Potten and Fiona Green stood down from the committee and were thanked warmly for their contributions. The committee met three times, in October, February and June.

An Advisory Committee oversees the Centre’s activities. This year the members were: Mary Beard (Classics), Simon Franklin (Slavonic Studies), Robert Gordon (Italian), David McKitterick (History/Wren Library), Rosamond McKitterick (History), John Rink (Music), Jim Secord (History and Philosophy of Science), Nicholas Thomas (Anthropology), John Thompson (Sociology), David Trotter (English), Mark Turin (Anthropology), and Alexandra Walsham (History). Members of the Advisory Committee are invited to comment on the Agendas and Minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee, and to alert members of the Centre to new developments and opportunities.

II website

The website sets out the aims of the Centre, reports back on conferences and colloquia, advertises news and events, and publicizes the research interests and activities of its members. This year, Alison Knight continued to update the website and to circulate information to the mailing list of around 220 people. Her hard work was much appreciated.

In 2014-15, two new items were added to the ‘Gallery’ space on the website. The first, by Jason Scott-Warren, was a report on the Early Modern Visual Marginalia symposium and the associated CUL exhibition. The second, by Anne Toner, discussed her new history of ellipsis.

The blog received around 40 contributions across this academic year (the same number as in 2013-14). Subjects included William Empson, centaurs, bicycles and ghost-signs; Harold Pinter’s Wisdens; Allied Forces Services Editions; the changing role of the archivist; cats and typos; Charles I’s travelling library; the serial (or Oxford) comma; the recovery of the Doves Press type from the silt of the Thames; gravestone errata; the World Book Day Fifty Shades of Grey debacle; the libraries of Thomas Jefferson and Osama bin Ladin; Cornelia Parker’s Magna Carta (An Embroidery); genius.com and the annotation of the world; Philip Larkin’s planned memorial in Poets’ Corner; Sonia Delaunay’s dress-poems; the redated Koran manuscript at Birmingham University; the drinkable book; and Ian Pears’ Arcadia.

The highlight of the year’s blogging was undoubtedly the ‘Twelve Days of Christmas’ blog featuring material texts derived from John 1: 14, ‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and
truth’. The curator and main author was Lucy Razzall, with contributions from Irene Galandra Cooper, Alison Knight, and Katherine Tycz. Among the exhibits were poems, pyxes, lecterns, signet rings, silk panels, sermons and inkstands. Many thanks to Lucy for putting together this truly resplendent online exhibition.

The main contributors to the blog this year were Jason Scott-Warren, Lucy Razzall and Amy Bowles. We need more bloggers! Members of the Centre wishing to post to the blog should contact Jason Scott-Warren (jes1003).

The CMT Facebook page, which provides broader publicity for the website, has now garnered 692 likes. The CMT’s Twitterfeed has 209 followers and has issued 162 tweets. We have recently added Twitter and Facebook feeds to the website, which should help to make them more visible to members and visitors.

III events and activities

Seminars

The Seminar in the History of Material Texts, convened by Dunstan Roberts, Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher, held the following meetings:

9 October CMT Welcome Party


6 November Discussion of David Trotter, Literature in the First Media Age: Britain Between the Wars (2013)

Respondents: Clare Pettitt and Mark Turner (King’s College, London)

20 November Lori Anne Ferrell (Claremont Graduate University), ‘Creating a “National” Archive of the English Reformation: The Parker Society and its Legacy’

22 January William Zachs (University of Edinburgh), ‘Authenticity and Duplicity: Investigations into Multiple Copies of Books’

5 February Victoria Mills (University of Cambridge), ‘Travel Writing and Tactile Tourism: The Tauchnitz Edition of The Marble Faun’

19 February Leslie James (University of Birmingham), ‘Transatlantic Passages: journalistic technique and the construction of a black international in West African and Caribbean colonial newspapers’
30 April  Jaclyn Rajsic (University of Cambridge), ‘The Rolling Text: using space in royal genealogies, c. 1300-c. 1450’.

14 May  Stacey McDowell (University of Cambridge), ‘Keats’s Reading’

Other seminars and workshops

Cambridge Medieval Palaeography Workshop

Convenors: Teresa Webber, Orietta Da Rold, Suzanne Paul and David Ganz

The Cambridge Medieval Palaeography Workshop is a forum for informal discussion on medieval script and scribal practices, and on the presentation, circulation and reception of texts in their manuscript contexts. Each workshop focuses upon a particular issue, usually explored through one or more informal presentations and general discussion.

This year the workshop held two meetings in the Cambridge University Library:

Friday 8 May  Codicologically and textually complex manuscripts and the problems and possibilities they present

Dr Sean Curran used the example of the La Clayette manuscript (a thirteenth-century manuscript containing various contents including polyphonic polytextual motets) to lead discussion of the problems of analysis and possibilities of interpretation presented by codicologically complex, multi-textual manuscripts, including the methodological and interpretative issues involved in combining textual and codicological analysis when seeking to understand the contexts in which books were produced and used.

Friday 22 May

The problem of dating manuscript witnesses for editors of texts and those studying the history of textual dissemination and reception

Professor Jill Mann drew on her current research (editing the Speculum stultorum of Nigel of Longchamps), to raise questions about dating manuscript witnesses to texts, especially where the manuscripts in question have not yet received close attention from palaeographers.
Editing the Long Nineteenth Century

A new seminar series, entitled ‘Editing the Long Nineteenth Century’, set out to discuss the principles and practices of editing nineteenth-century literary works. Co-hosted by the Centre for Material Texts, and convened by Michael J. Sullivan, the series ran over Lent Term 2015, drawing on the considerable editorial expertise of scholars working in Cambridge.

The first seminar, on 21 January, was delivered by Professor Dame Gillian Beer FBA, Emerita King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at the University of Cambridge, where she was President of Clare Hall from 1994 until 2001. In addition to her acclaimed monographs, Dame Gillian has published numerous editions of novels, poetry and scientific writing. It was this variety of editorial styles and experiences that formed the focus of her talk.

Our second seminar, on 4 February, was led by Dr Catherine Phillips of Downing College, who is co-editor for a major, AHRC-funded edition of the Complete Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Dr Phillips has edited what is widely considered the best general edition of Hopkins, for Oxford World’s Classics, and her workshop covered all elements of manuscript studies, from dating and verification to editing poetry from manuscripts and proofs.

Finally, on 18 February, Professor Nora Crook, Emerita Professor of English at Anglia Ruskin, took her audience through the tangled textual histories with which editors are confronted when hoping to arrive at authoritative texts. Professor Crook is general editor of the multi-volume Complete Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley, the first full variorum edition. In 2014, her discovery of thirteen lost letters by Mary Shelley was reported by newspapers and broadcasters across Britain and the US. Her talk on 18th February dealt with variorum editions in their various forms, while introducing the editorial rationale behind her current project.

For the nineteenth century, few of the skills involved in textual and manuscript work tend to be discussed in day-to-day teaching and scholarship. Offering invaluable training for postgraduates and academics, these seminars found an interested audience keen to support the continued practice of editing nineteenth-century texts.

Other events

The CMT held a number of occasional social events during the year, including a Material Texts Breakfast on Wednesday 13 May, 9-10.30 am, and an end of year garden party on 7 July in the Fellows’ Garden of St John’s College.
On 1 May 2015, the Centre for Material Texts sponsored a colloquium on the subject of visual marginalia—the annotation of books with pictures rather than (or as well as) words. In the Middle Ages, scribes often decorated the margins of their texts with images, which sometimes bore an ironic or subversive relationship to the words they accompanied. Our colloquium, organized by Dr Alexander Marr from the Department of History of Art, focused on a later period (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), and on images added by later readers rather than by the initial producers of texts.

The images that renaissance readers left in their books took many forms. One of the most common was the pointing hand, or manicule, that served to direct attention to a particular passage. Some scholars used astrological symbols to make the themes of a book visible—Mars for war, Venus for love, Mercury for wit and so on. Others added illustrations marking references to particular places, individuals and events. Once a whole volume had been ‘digested’ in this way, the margins would function as a kind of running contents list that made information retrieval easy and pleasurable. Then there are a few prestige books, such as the copy of Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly* that was illustrated by Hans Holbein, which can be considered works of art in their own right.

Julian Luxford (History of Art, St Andrews) opened the colloquium by drawing attention to the sheer variety of kinds of visual marginalia, and the difficulty of locating, describing and understanding them. Showing a range of examples, from pictures that seemed to be executed by trainee artists to sexual images perhaps added by bored schoolboys, Luxford suggested that it was time to stop thinking of these marginalia as ‘doodles’ or ‘pen-trials’. However amateurish they may seem, we should take them seriously as evidence for the visual culture of the period. He also wondered whether we should be talking about ‘margins’—a term with a lot of ideological baggage—or should think instead of ‘borders’, a term which forces us to think about what lay beyond the boundaries of the page.
The study of visual marginalia is sometimes challenging by design, as when early modern readers created esoteric pictorial schemes that elude our best efforts to make sense of them. In their contribution to the colloquium, Alex Marr and Kate Isard (Visiting Scholar, Cambridge) discussed the copy of Vincenzo Cartari’s *Imagini* (1581) now in the Houghton Library at Harvard. This book has been annotated extensively in Dutch, Latin and French, and has been illustrated with a series of astrological, alchemical, mock-heraldic and downright lewd images that are at once wonderfully bizarre and exceptionally difficult to decode. The volume presents an ongoing puzzle and a provocation to further research.

Other kinds of visual marginalia were technical and professional. In his talk, Richard Oosterhoff (Cambridge) explored the schoolbooks of the German humanist Beatus Rhenanus, in which we can see him ‘thinking through diagrams’ about the relationship between mathematics and the nature of reality. Francesco Benelli (Columbia) turned our attention to a tiny diagram—less than one inch square—that the Renaissance architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger added in the margins of his copy of Vitruvius’s treatise on architecture, marking his misunderstanding of the text in ways that went on to influence the buildings he created. These papers suggested the fecundity and the difficulty of the process of translating words into images, which is manifested when readers start to draw in the margins.

In the wake of the colloquium, the CMT assembled a small exhibition of books with images in the University Library entrance hall, displaying visual marginalia uncovered by Kate Isard and Liam Sims in a recent search of the Cambridge rare book stacks. We also built a display around a copy of Euclid’s *Elements* (1570) annotated by the imprisoned recusant Thomas Tresham, which was discovered in the University Library by Joseph Jarrett in 2013.

**IV grant applications**

Orietta Da Rold was awarded a CHRGS grant (£17,294) for her project entitled ‘Mapping Medieval Paper in England’. The project, which is now nearly complete, aims to set up a web-based dataset of known paper documents and books dating from 1300 to 1475, and to refine the methodological approach for a larger research project provisionally entitled ‘PaperMap: The Literary and Cultural Life of Paper in Medieval England’.

Edward Wilson-Lee resubmitted his application for an ERC Starting Grant in relation to the Hernando Colón project (see the 2013-14 report for full details). He was interviewed for this grant in September 2015.
V selected publications by members of the Centre, 2014-15


--- ‘The Sources of the Verse Examples in Gascoigne’s Certayne Notes of Instruction’, *Notes and Queries*, 62 (2015), 52-3


Joanna Bellis, “‘The Reader myghte lamente”: The sieges of Calais (1346) and Rouen (1418) in chronicle, poem and play’, in *War and Literature*, ed. Laura Ashe and Ian Patterson (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 84-106


Christopher Burlinson and Andrew Zurcher, eds, *A Supplement of the Faerie Queen by Ralph Knevet* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014)


--- ‘Prince Eugene of Savoy’s Library: A Preliminary Assessment’, Rivista Storica Italiana 126 (2014), 742-87


Sachiko Kusukawa, online exhibition: ‘Vivitur ingenio: The 500th Anniversary of Vesalius’ (Cambridge University Library, 2014)

--- ‘Aligning observations in Edward Tyson’s Lumbricus Latus (1684)’, Historia scientiarum 23 (2014), 167-190

--- ‘Richard Waller’s colour chart (1686)’, in Magdalena Bushart and Friedrich Steinle et al., eds, Colour Histories: Science, Art, and Technology in the 17th and 18th centuries (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 3-21


--- ‘Shakespeare, Perception and Theory of Mind’ in Reading Literature Cognitively, ed. Terence Cave, special issue of Paragraph, 37 (2014), 79-95


Vicky Mills, 'Photography, Travel Writing and Tactile Tourism' in Mary Henes and Brian H. Murray, eds, Travel Writing, Visual Culture, and Form, 1760-1900 (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015)


— ‘Poetic Authority in Middle Irish Narrative: a Case Study’, in Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in Medieval Ireland, ed. Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2014), 263-91


— and Laura Ashe, eds., War and Literature, Essays and Studies 14 (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014)


---  ed., with Emily Dourish, Emprynted in thys manere: Early printed treasures from Cambridge University Library (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2014)


Dunstan Roberts, “‘Abundantly replenisht with Books of his owne purchasing and choyce’. Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s Library at Montgomery Castle’, Library and Information History 31 (2015), 117-36


Michael J. Plygawko (Sullivan), “‘The Controlless Core of Human Hearts’: Writing the Self in Byron’s Don Juan’, The Byron Journal, 42 (2014), 123-132


--- ‘Landscape as Literary Criticism: Jane Austen, Anna Barbauld and the Narratological Application of the Picturesque’, *Critical Survey* 26 (2014), 3-19


Andrew Zurcher, ‘Shakespeare’s Casus Belly; or, Cormorant War, and the Wasting of Men on Shakespeare’s Stage; or, Eating Wars and Digesting Plays; or, The Art of Chucking Men Into Pits; or, Shakespeare, Tacitism, and Why Plato Don’t Matter’, in *War and Literature*, ed. Laura Ashe and Ian Patterson (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 107-38

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and Christopher Burlinson, eds, *A Supplement of the Faerie Queen by Ralph Knevet* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014)

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VI  the future

2015-16 is set to be an exceptionally busy year for the CMT. Among the many excitements in store, we are going to be taking delivery of two state-of-the-art cases for the display of books. These will reside on the first floor of the English Faculty and will allow us to put on a programme of exhibitions which will be tied in to the Centre’s wider activities. Hester Lees-Jeffries has taken on the mantle of CMT exhibitions organizer; please contact her if you have ideas or materials for future display.

Among events currently in preparation are:

(1) a one-day colloquium on the *Academic Book of the Future*, which is a collaboration with the AHRC-funded project currently in train at UCL. This will take place on 11 November 2015 in the Pitt Building, and will feature a range of speakers with different perspectives on academic publishing.

(2) a major international conference on the theme of *digital editing*, to be held at CRASSH from 7-9 January 2016 (see http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/26264). This event is being organized by a committee headed by Andrew Webber (MML), who is PI for the AHRC-funded Digital Critical Edition of Middle-Period Works by Arthur Schnitzler.
(3) an interdisciplinary symposium entitled ‘Books in the Making’, convened by Kasia Boddy and David Winters, to explore the modalities of contemporary literary production.


In addition to these events, we have an exciting HMT seminar programme in prospect. In a change to past practice, the majority of the seminars will be held in the UL’s Milstein seminar room, to allow for more first-hand engagement with printed and manuscript materials.

In 2015-16, we will be eagerly watching the unfolding of a fundraising campaign for an Institute for Global Palaeogeographies, which aims to place Cambridge at the forefront of research into the world’s written heritage. Several members of the CMT steering committee (headed by Paul Russell) have been involved in formulating these proposals, which will be launched in the autumn of 2015.