

Harvard-Princeton Early Modern Workshop 2013

Dickinson 211, Princeton University

Thursday, January 10, and Friday, January 11, 2013

Alex Bevilacqua. *The Bibliothèque Orientale: Sources, Organization, Readers*. PU

Barthélemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1697) was one of the great achievements of 17th-century Oriental scholarship, yet we still lack a basic understanding of this work. What precise motivations inspired its creation? By what means was it assembled? The *Bibliothèque*'s debt to Katib Çelebi's great bibliography *Kashf al-Dhunun* is commonly asserted, but in fact d'Herbelot's book is far from a translation of it. For instance, *Kashf* is organized systematically, whereas d'Herbelot chose an alphabetical organization. Neither does the *Bibliothèque* closely resemble books in the *bibliotheca* genre. I will attempt to shed light on the *Bibliothèque*'s generic and organizational idiosyncrasy. Finally, I will discuss its readership: against the recent claim that the book failed because it was impossible to consult, I will analyze its reception through reeditions, translations, annotated copies and citations.

Hannah Callaway. *Democratizing Property: The Confiscation of Émigré Wealth in the French Revolution*. HU

In February 1792, almost six months before the collapse of the French monarchy, the revolutionary Legislative Assembly passed a law sequestering the property of the thousands of émigrés who had left France since the outbreak of revolution in July, 1789. Over the following years, the legislation against the émigrés expanded dramatically. Émigré property was sold at auction, and even the property of the family members of émigrés was attacked. The policies that Jacobin leaders adopted towards the émigrés appear at first blush to contradict the ideal of individual private property that the Jacobins promoted and fiercely defended at other moments of the Revolution. However, close attention to the fate of émigré property in the Revolution offers the key to decoding the Jacobins' complicated attitude towards the right of property itself. By tracking émigré property legislation, we can see that the Jacobin understanding of private property and its place in the polity was not as clear as narratives that emphasize the period 1789-1791 might suggest, and that in fact the Jacobins didn't have a clear sense of how private property would function, but rather slowly pieced together a practical philosophy of property over the course of the Revolution.

Frederic Clark. *The Discovery of Postclassical Time and the Transformation of Antiquity*. PU

This paper seeks to offer a new account of the pre-history of that tripartite schema of dividing European historical time into the ancient, medieval, and modern – a macro-narrative still often described as the product of eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the turn toward stagist or stadial models of temporal change. By focusing on the decades on either side of 1600, it explores the invention of notions of postclassical time in early modern classical scholarship. Surveying a selection of manuscript materials and annotated books, it examines how late humanist scholars "read" the postclassical at a moment when antiquity itself had morphed into an increasingly labile and elastic category. Specifically, it focuses on three scholars who made signal contributions to the study of the late antique and medieval world, despite the fact that their contributions to this subject have long been neglected – namely, Isaac Casaubon, John Dee, and G.J. Vossius. In doing so, this paper argues that the development of robust conceptions of postclassical time was but one component of a turn towards temporal eclecticism and diversity in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century classical scholarship, and hence a crucial prologue to the advent of "modern" historical periodizing.

Elizabeth Cross. *The Compagnie des Indes and the Fate of Commercial Empire in the French Revolution*. HU

My dissertation studies the fate of France's late eighteenth-century global empire through the lens of the last French East India Company (*Compagnie des Indes orientales*) in the final years of the Old Regime and into the French Revolution. Though this Company has not been the subject of any recent scholarly attention, the circumstances surrounding its incorporation and dissolution elucidate broader economic policy trends as France grappled with the perils of interdependence in the rapidly globalizing world of late eighteenth-century commerce. I hypothesize that concerns – both pragmatic and ideological – about the stakes of competition with Britain in Asia led France to develop an economic policy built on metropolitan economic and industrial regeneration in which this Company played a counterintuitive part. I will, in turn, frame this discussion with an analysis of parallel developments in the history of economic thought, such as the rise of the inward-looking, agrarian Physiocrats, and other anti-imperial theorists of the Enlightenment.

Paul Davis. *Cloaking Clio: Historical Costumes in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. PU

For my paper, I was thinking of presenting something visual on historical attire in the middle of the eighteenth-century, looking at

paintings by Johann Zoffany and Joshua Reynolds, the costumes worn by David Garrick on the stage, as well as illustrations in various books.

The goal of the paper will be to make sense of Zoffany's portrait of George III and his family in Stuart attire, and to understand how the recent past became seen as foreign.

Devin Fitzgerald. *News In the Making of Early Modern China*. HU.

The fall of Beijing and the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644 reverberated throughout the early modern world. From New Delhi, to Edo, Pueblo, Antwerp, and beyond, information networks carried reports of China's collapse to Manchu barbarian onslaught. Within a few years, persons on nearly every continent were discussing and debating one of the first global news events. This paper will serve to briefly introduce the spread of information and individuals in the immediate aftermath of 1644. Viewing the conflict as media event, I argue that the world's virtual witnessing of events in China shifted images of the Ming and Qing, as different reports and reporters manipulated and were manipulated by parties involved in the conflict. Looking carefully at the dialogical dynamism of early modern information networks and news practices, this paper illustrates the movement of local events into global news and representation.

Cynthia Hounq. *Faking Japanese: The Case of the Fake Kakiemon vases from Meissen, and What They Tell Us About European Knowledge of East Asia in the Eighteenth-Century*. PU.

In 1731, Karl Heinrich von Hoym, the Oberleiter (overseer) of the Meissen porcelain manufactory, was arrested for fraud and graft. From 1729 until his arrest in 1731, von Hoym collaborated with Rodolphe Lemaire, a French trader (négotiant) who monopolized (through a special license granted by von Hoym) the sales and distribution of Meissen porcelain in France and Holland. The two men colluded to produce large numbers of fake Japanese Kakiemon porcelain. Though they were produced as authentic pieces of Meissen porcelain, they were sold as Japanese, rather than Saxon, porcelain in France and Holland. The Lemaire/von Hoym case foregrounds a set of linked questions: How do European consumers learn to distinguish between Japanese and Chinese porcelain? Do they also begin to make the same conceptual distinctions in other arenas, material and cultural? What are the markers of difference, and where do the boundaries lie, between Chinese and Japanese things? Why would consumers choose one type of object over another? I argue that Europeans learned to judge the difference between Chinese and Japanese things first, in the world of consumption, and the framing of broader differences between Chinese and Japanese cultural realms occurred through a conjunction of aesthetic and consumer judgments, based on objects at hand, and the influence of popular

ethnography (prints and books) that described China and Japan for a popular, rather than scholarly, audience.

Hansun Hsiung. *Household Enlightenment: Barbarian Books and European Knowledge in Early Modern Japan*. HU

Criticizing the utility of travelogues and natural histories in the tenth note of the Second Discourse, Rousseau sharply observed, "However much individuals go hither and thither, it seems that philosophy does not travel at all." The reasons for this, he continued, were "obvious, at least for distant lands." Those who embarked on long voyages were never the caliber of "a Montesquieu, a Buffon, a Diderot, a Duclos, a d'Alembert, a Condillac." Rather, they were "sailors, merchants, soldiers, and missionaries" – either full of "zeal and God" or else "more interested in filling their purses than their heads." His observation provokes. Given such conditions, how indeed could philosophy ever actually travel beyond a proper and pre-established sphere of *sçavans*? This question – admittedly a non-standard interpretation of Rousseau's meaning – forms the basis of my presentation. Taking up the specific instance of eighteenth-century encyclopedism, I offer a preliminary outline of a network of diffusion, translation, and reappropriation from Lyons to Amsterdam to Paris to Leiden, then over continents and seas to Nagasaki and Edo in Japan. This inquiry into philosophical border-crossing will serve to introduce, in the final quarter of the presentation, my larger structural investigation into the unintended leaks and seepages of bookish European knowledge outside the boundaries of the Republic of Letters – seepages produced precisely by such 'unfit' porters as "sailors, merchants, soldiers, and missionaries," and which led to a whole other order of philosophy.

Valeria A. Lopez Fadul. *Language as Archive: Etymologies and the Remote History of Spain*. PU

Like many of his contemporaries Jean Bodin believed that etymologies were central to historical writing and important for deciphering origins. In his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566) he claimed that etymologizing could lead a scholar to discover the origins of peoples and the history of places. Similarly, in sixteenth-century Spain writers of a variety of genres, claiming to follow the example of Isidore of Seville and Josephus used this method of inquiry to approach questions as diverse as the remote history of the Iberian Peninsula, the origins of the inhabitants of the New World, the order of nature or the multiple meanings of the Bible. Scholars working under the patronage of Phillip II, like Córdoba humanist and antiquarian Ambrosio de Morales, the Basque lawyer Andrés Poza and the Biblical scholar Benito Arias Montano, employed

etymological techniques in their attempts to reconstruct the Iberian Peninsula's Classical, Basque and Hebraic past. Despite their diverse motives for pursuing historical inquiries- Morales, for instance, was interested in Spain's sacred history - their projects converge in their study of words as testaments of remote times. This paper examines the methods that Spanish humanists put in practice to study etymologies in the service of history and the ways in which their works benefited from Spain's unique imperial position, particularly from the Spanish crown's sponsorship of massive knowledge gathering projects such as the systematic collection of books and manuscripts and the cosmographical questionnaires known as the *Relaciones Geográficas*.

Stuart McManus. *Poor Cicero's Almanack*. HU

I will discuss the practice of Latin oratory in the British Atlantic world c. 1700-1780. By centering my narrative on the experiences of Benjamin Franklin and his contemporaries, I hope to give a sense of the ritual and civic contexts of "speaking like Cicero" in early America and to show the vitality of the fundamental practice of Renaissance humanism in the "age of reason". This paper is part of my larger project to map the global expansion of humanist Latin oratory from Renaissance Italy through the British and Iberian Empires.

Oksana Mykhed. *Russian Doctors, Polish Patients: Bubonic Plague and the Building of a New Imperial Province (1770-1782)*. HU

This paper explores the evolution of infrastructure and administration of the Dnieper region between the Russian Empire and Poland-Lithuania in the second half of the eighteenth century. Officially, the border between the two states was marked by the Dnieper River and a line of outposts. However, the absence of an effective border defense, police and medical services until 1770 exposed the Kiev province of the Russian Empire to the most severe outbreak of bubonic plague in the century. Kiev was in the center of the outbreak, and the city suffered substantial human and material losses. This paper argues that the anti-plague measures of Russian imperial authorities in Kiev not only overcame the outbreak of the pestilence but also allowed the empire to modify the government and legislation of the province in 1770-1782. These measures increased the presence of imperial officials in Kiev and led to the full incorporation of the province into the empire and its adjustment to the viceroyalty standard. The paper examines the impact of Russian and foreign medical professionals, military and administrative personnel, new border infrastructure, and remodeling of noble-peasant relations on the province. The adjustment of public health and provincial government to the Russian imperial standards faced multiple challenges, but, ultimately, it increased the loyalty of the population to Russian authorities. My research reveals that improvement of border infrastructure and living standards allowed the Russian Empire to incorporate Russo-Polish borderlands and attract

their population more quickly and effectively than did political repressions, military interventions or forced cultural assimilation.

Andrei Pesic. *The "Dangerous" Concert: Rigorist critiques of religious music in early European concert series*. PU

Beginning in 1725, the Concert Spirituel in Paris began to play religious music in a sometime guardroom/ballroom in the Palais des Tuileries. Created as a diversion for the Parisian elite during religious holidays when other spectacles were prohibited, the Concert Spirituel was one of the first concert series and became one of the most famous in Europe, continuing until the Revolution and eventually programming a mix of religious and secular pieces. In this presentation, I focus on the early years of the Concert, when rigorist critics bemoaned its worldly nature. A Jansenist bishop called these concerts more “dangerous” for Christian morals than the opera, not only “profaning” holy texts, but also “tempting” good Christians with its seeming propriety vis-à-vis other spectacles. The contested status of this new institution allowed critics and supporters alike to describe its goals in widely divergent terms; I relate this debate to quarrels about the propriety of luxury as well as contemporaneous religious controversies, drawing on descriptions of the early years of the concert in the periodical press and diaries.

Helen Pfeifer. *The Social Life of Ottoman Texts*. PU

My paper will focus on the importance of social gatherings known as *majālis* for sixteenth-century Ottoman intellectual production. I will show the way in which a number of prominent Ottoman literary genres were inseparable from certain physical and social spaces. Reuniting these writings with the gatherings that helped to spawn them sheds new light on the nature of the Ottoman intellectual tradition and the way it changed as the empire did.

Flori Pierri. "A beast whose scales are as Armor:" *Describing the Armadillo in Early Modern Europe*. PU

“When it needs to make a speedy escape,” the Spanish Jesuit Juan Eusebio Nieremberg wrote in his *Historia Naturae, maxime peregrinae*, the armadillo “curls up into a ball and rolls away.” This was all fine and good, but what the readers of this text might have wondered was: what was an armadillo in the first place? With the initial excursions by Europeans into the New World, the sailors, explorers, bureaucrats, and priests who travelled there encountered some very striking animals like the armadillo, this strange creature that had the ability to curl itself up into a ball. As these people soon found out, the two worlds

divided by the Atlantic did not share the same animals—indeed, the New World contained in it some very odd creatures, creatures that posed several conceptual problems for early modern Europeans. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these people used various strategies in their attempts to understand new animals within the intellectual frameworks about the natural world that informed all efforts to describe the natural history of this region. In this talk, I plan to use the armadillo (which appears in virtually every work of natural history published about the New World, as well as in various chronicles, maps, engravings, and paintings of the period) to discuss some of the broader questions of how novel animals were initially understood by Europeans, how they were explained, and how they were integrated into existing structures of knowledge about the natural world.

Margaret Schotte. *Astronomy Lessons on the Prince de Conti, c. 1756*. PU

This paper is a microhistory of early modern navigators and their shipboard education. It draws upon documents seized in the spring of 1756 from the "Prince de Conti," a French merchant vessel on its homeward voyage from Bengal. Among the "Prince's" crew were several assiduous students who submitted daily astronomical observations to an unidentified teacher. By exploring the careers and hierarchies of the men on board this ship, in conjunction with naval legislation and popular published textbooks, I hypothesize about the identities and achievements of these navigators. Through this case study we gain a clearer picture of what types of mathematics were prized among the men in charge of steering ships to safety. I will conclude with some general claims about my broader project, arguing that the training on board the "Prince de Conti," far from being an isolated example of a few scholarly sailors, sheds light on early modern modes of learning, expertise, and technical training within a dynamic international maritime community.

Michael Tworek. *The Ciceronian Commonwealth: Cicero, Study Abroad, and the Revival of Antiquity in Renaissance Poland*. HU

The revival of antiquity during the Renaissance has long been the subject of intense scholarly interest. However, historians have tended to focus on western and southern Europe and to neglect eastern Europe. Few turn to Renaissance Poland, for instance, to examine the reception of Cicero. This paper seeks to rectify this by investigating the importance of Cicero and his work for the career of one eminent sixteenth-century Polish humanist, Andreas Patricius. The image of Cicero as an eloquent statesman, defender of republican liberty, and a *novus homo* was deeply appealing to middling Polish nobles and burghers, like Patricius. Cicero, and humanist studies more broadly, represented a way to improve their political and social standing in the *Adelsrepublik* that was sixteenth-century Poland. Moreover, their studies abroad with noted foreign humanists not only cemented Polish humanists' familiarity with Cicero, but also increased the prestige and usefulness of

such knowledge upon their return home. Specifically, I will explore how Patricius' studies in Padua and published work on fragments of Cicero's lost orations reveal the close collaboration between Italian and Polish humanists as well as the political, cultural, and social potential of Cicero's reception in Poland. In the case of Patricius, his work on Ciceronian fragments helped him to become a royal secretary and eventually, a high-ranking prelate. More broadly, I argue that these factors not only enabled Polish humanists to engage in pan-European intellectual conversations, but also united these Poles politically and culturally into a Ciceronian "commonwealth" at home.