Introduction

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The eighteenth century, perhaps more than any other, was a pivotal time in the development of the mechanics and methods of communication. Commercial, political, legal, social and religious interactions were all facilitated by a variety of material processes such as handwriting, painting, drawing, printing and engraving which coexisted alongside more ephemeral and immaterial means of communication including voice, gesture, costume and performance. New sites for consuming the products of communication emerged such as coffee houses, oratories, libraries, institutes, theatres, shops and galleries. Developments in road and water transport and postal systems facilitated means of communication and enabled the products of pen and print to travel further and faster than ever before.

Printing, arguably the pre-eminent form of mass communication in the eighteenth century, was not a new technology, but how print happened, its purpose and function was certainly changing. Letterpress, the dominant printing process, had long been used to produce books for the prosperous. By the eighteenth century, however, many more people encountered other forms of print such as newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, business ephemera or jobbing print. This plethora of material serviced commerce and finance, politics and science, leisure and religion. The period was one of great commercial and financial transformation offering businesses new market opportunities. As James Raven remarked in *Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England*, printing helped stimulate a commercial revolution through the production of all those products necessary for the smooth running of trade: advertising literature, publicity material and office stationary.[1] Increased trade meant a general growth in prosperity. For the first time the emerging middling classes had disposable incomes which they spent on a range of leisure activities from theatre-going to shopping, visiting pleasure gardens and travelling both at home and abroad. Printing facilitated this with the production of a range of ephemera including calling cards, invitations, programmes and tickets. Printing also helped stimulate scientific and technical progress. During the eighteenth century there was a growing interest in recording, listing, describing and documenting the

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[1] Raven, James, *Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Woodbridge: 2014).

world, whether for personal interest and private consumption, or for general record and the greater good. Printing helped advance general knowledge through new modes of publication and wide-ranging products—pamphlets, posters, leaflets, newspapers, journals—which had implications for the way lives were organised, structured and documented. Printed communication was not simply dependent upon the word. As Paula McDowell remarks in her article 'Media and mediation in the eighteenth century', technological advancements in engraving and lithography, used for the production of images, resulted in an explosion of visual materials such as maps, charts, diagrams, atlases, illustrations and prints.[2] Print shops became part of eighteenth-century street culture, and were important sites of visual display allowing ordinary people to keep up with current affairs and fashion through carefully curated, frequently updated window displays. The news became visual and images started to be included in newspapers, magazines and directories. Printing was, as Michael Twyman observes, part of the 'everyday life of the community.'[3]

Throughout the eighteenth century there was, therefore, a build-up of printed documents: the period witnessed an accumulated reliance on printed texts over the oral and the written. But the spoken and the inscribed were not wholly usurped by the typographic. Paul Thompson, in *Voice of the Past: oral history*, argues that, despite the advent of printing, the oral persisted into the eighteenth century.[4] Important matters of Church and State were spoken not written: in the courtroom and at the altar, when the 'truth' mattered, oral testimony held precedence over written authentication.

In the seventeenth century, Sir Francis Bacon wrote: 'for the organ of tradition, it is either speech or writing'.[5] To a certain extent this remained so in the eighteenth century, although, as Ewan Clayton argues in *The Golden Thread: the story of writing*, the ascendancy of printing caused a significant shift in public perceptions of handwriting. [6] Once the printing press had spread across the social landscape and printed material became an everyday encounter, Clayton suggests that the regularity, uniformity and authority of the printed page meant handwriting was viewed as individual and unique.

[2] Paula McDowell, 'Media and Mediation in the eighteenth century', *Oxford Handbooks Online,* March 2017. Online, DOI: 10:1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.46, (Accessed 12 August 2019).
[3] Michael. Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970: An Illustrated History of Its Development and Uses in* England (London: 1970), 119
[4] Paul Thompson, in *Voice of the Past: oral history*, (Oxford: 2000).
[5] Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning,* Joseph Devey (ed), (New York: 1901). Online. oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1433, (Accessed 12 August 2019).
[6] Ewan Clayton, *The Golden Thread: the story of writing*, (London: 2013).

Yet manuscript circulation continued and even flourished. In their 'Introduction' to *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: manuscript publication in England 1550-1800*, George Justice and Nathan Tinker reason that print did not replace manuscript culture, rather 'manuscript culture "grew into" print culture, existing alongside it … often influencing both textual production and the texts themselves.'[7] In *The Pen and the People: English letter writers 1660-1800,* Susan Whyman demonstrates the popularity of writing, suggesting that, partly as a result of fashion for epistolary fiction, personal letter writing became an increasingly pervasive eighteenth-century pastime which impacted not only on the lives of individual correspondents and their recipients but also the wider culture.[8] This led Paula McDowell to argue that the widespread circulation of manuscript correspondence alongside that of print, 'challenges any easy alignment of print with "publication" or manuscript with the "private space." '[9]

Communication in the eighteenth century means, therefore, not only print but also manuscript and voice, and a wide range of associated artefacts, interactions, practices, and technologies. In *A Social History of the Media* Asa Briggs and Peter Burke focus on the social and cultural context within which communication media happened.[10] They argue that new methods of communication do not simply replace older ones, rather old and new media coexist. This is a point reinforced by David McKitterick in *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* where he argues that while, from the 1450s onwards, the printed word became familiar across Europe, many of the changes associated with printing were only gradually absorbed and that manuscript and print were complements to each other, rather than alternatives.[11] The eighteenth century was, therefore, a multimedia society, with what we would now describe as a 'mixed model' of communication systems. Society was also becoming cognisant of the power of communication and the uses to which the various media could be deployed. As Clifford Siskin and William Warne suggest in their introduction to *This is Enlightenment* that the eighteenth century was 'the moment at which structures of communication became "seriously realised" or understood as "media" mediating between people across time, distance and diverse interest groups became the norm in the eighteenth century.'[12]

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[7] George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (eds), 'Introduction', *Women's writing and the circulation of ideas: manuscript publication in England 1550-1800*, (Oxford: 2002), 9.
[8] Susan Whyman, *The pen and the people: English letter writers 1660-1800*, (Oxford: 2009).
[9] Paula McDowell, 'Media and Mediation', 2017.
[10] Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media*, (Cambridge: 2009).
[11] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830*, (Cambridge: 2003).
[12] Clifford Siskin and William Warne (eds), *This is Enlightenment,* (Chicago: 2010).

John Baskerville

One individual with a particular understanding of 'media' and the formidable power of pen, print and communication was John Baskerville (1707–75), the eighteenth-century typographer, printer, industrialist and Enlightenment figure. In the 'Preface' to his 1758 edition of *Paradise Lost* Baskerville described himself as 'an early admirer of the beauty of letters' concerned with the aesthetics of both the written and printed word.[13] Baskerville was, however, more than simply a lover of letters, he also had both a practical and commercial interest in their reproduction.

Although 'trained to no occupation' Baskerville wrote an 'excellent hand' and from 1726 offered his services as a writing master in Birmingham.[14] Here he not only developed an admiration for letters, but also became 'desirous of contributing to the perfection of them.'[15] To further this ambition he set himself up as a supplier of gravestones. A slate-cut inscription, now hanging in the Library of Birmingham, advertises Baskerville's lettering 'in any of the hands' and demonstrates his familiarity with several styles of writing. This stone shows Baskerville's interest in lettering went beyond that required of a writing master and that he appreciated the 'beauty of letters' both in application and aspiration. Baskerville's fascination with writing was life-long. Examples of penmanship from leading writing masters were hung as decoration in his home thereby ensuring his regard for fine writing was, perhaps, 'a matter of daily encounter.'[16]

Baskerville took his experience with the pen and the chisel into his printing house which he set-up in around 1750. Here his knowledge of lettering was extended to the creation of the typeface which now bears his name. 'Baskerville', with its well-considered 'proportions and design, its methods of thickening or thinning parts of a letter, and its sharper and more horizontal treatment of serifs',[17] is one of the world's most widely used, enduring and influential typefaces, which changed the course of type design.[18] The books Baskerville printed using his typeface—from an edition of Virgil's poetry in 1757

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[13] John Baskerville, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost,* John Milton, (Birmingham: 1758).
[14] William Hutton, *History of Birmingham*, (Birmingham, 1783), 91.
[15] F. E. Pardoe, *John Baskerville of Birmingham: letter-founder and printer*, (London: 19745)
[16] Noble, *A Dictionary of National Biography,* (Oxford, 1806), ii, 361. Ewan Clayton, 'John Baskerville the Writing Master: Calligraphy and Type in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' *John Baskerville: art and industry of the Enlightenment,* (Liverpool: 2017).
[17] John Dreyfus, 'The Baskerville punches, 1750–1950', *Into print: selected writings on printing history, typography and book production,* (London, 1994).
[18] Caroline Archer-Parré, 'Printing and the printed word', *Birmingham: the workshop of the world,* Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (eds), (Liverpool, 2016), 269.

to his final publication, William Hunter's *The anatomy of the gravid uterus* of 1774—are masterpieces of the art and technology of typographic transmission.[19] Baskerville's interest in communication, however, went beyond the textual and some of his books also included images. Several contain illustrations that were designed by leading French draughtsmen of the day and exquisitely engraved by the Paris-based Molini Brothers. Baskerville's concern for pictorial communication was also demonstrated by the products of his Japanning business—an enterprise he established in around 1742 and which ultimately funded his work as a printer.[20] The household goods he manufactured—waiters, salvers, tea trays, and tea boards—were all finely painted with roots, fruits, flowers and insects and were regarded by many to be 'admirable as works of art.'[21] Baskerville's japanned goods are examples of how images were used to communicate their owners' taste and status. Baskerville's understanding of the communicative power of imagery was also demonstrated by his own portrait. Painted by James Millar (1735-1805) in 1774, it is a carefully constructed exercise in image control and visual communication.[22]

John Baskerville, was an accomplished communicator familiar with the many mediums available in the eighteenth century and adept not only with older methods of reproduction—pen and ink, chisel and stone, and paint on canvas—but also the newer technology of metal type and the printing press. Aware of the power of communication Baskerville ably moved between processes.

In 2015 the Baskerville Society, took the words and work of John Baskerville as inspiration for its second international conference: 'The Beauty of Letters: text, type and communication in the eighteenth century' which was held at the University of Birmingham. Over the course of two days a community of academics and independent researchers, printers and designers, librarians, curators and archivists, scientists, artists and collectors gathered to hear scholars present their research into various aspects of communication in the eighteenth century. Following Baskerville's example, speakers reflected on how the complimentary processes of handwriting and typography developed during the eighteenth century; the interconnections between writing and

[19] Caroline Archer-Parré and Malcolm Dick, 'Introduction', *John Baskerville: art, industry and technology in the Enlightenment* (Liverpool, 2017), 1.
[20] Yvonne Jones, *Japanned papier mâché and tinware c. 1740-1940.* (Suffolk: 2012)
[21] William Hawkes Smith, *Birmingham and its Vicinity* (Birmingham, 1836), ii, 19.
[22] The painting is held by Birmingham Museums Trust, Online https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/explore-art/items/1940P605/portrait-of-john-baskerville-1706-1775 (Accessed 14 August 2019).

printing; and the social and cultural impact of the pen and the press. Collectively the talks considered how the processes of both writing and printing contributed to the creation of cultural identity and taste, assisted in the spread of knowledge and furthered both personal and national political, economic, social and cultural change in Britain and the wider world. Together the papers produced an original narrative on the nature of communication in the eighteenth century and brought fresh perspectives on writing, printing, communication and the literate society of the Enlightenment.

Pen, print and communication in the eighteenth century takes a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of communication and a major strength of the book is its diversity and scope. The chapters offer a mix of materials in relation both to geography, genre and historical analysis by using different methods and approaches of a wide range of scholars. The contributors to the book are also diverse, including those with well-established reputations alongside early-career scholars.

About this volume

Pen, print and communication in the eighteenth century comprises a selection of those papers presented at the 2015 Baskerville Society conference and others specially commissioned for the publication. The opening chapters, from Nicolas Barker, Giles Bergel, Persida Lazarević Di Giacomo and Timothy Underhill, consider eighteenth-century penmanship and the teaching of writing. Collectively they evaluate how the relatively new process of printing helped advance the older craft of the writing masters; how printers and engravers rendered penmanship into print; and how multiple copies of printed handwriting manuals had both social and economic impact, and influenced the production of non-Latin texts, such as shorthand and Cyrillic. Nicolas Barker opens the volume with his chapter 'The growth of copperplate script: Joseph Champion and *The Universal Penman*'. Here he evaluates a major illustrated eighteenth-century manual which helped to popularise and provide instruction in the ways of handwriting. The book contains examples from writing masters and calligraphers; the most important being Joseph Champion (1709-68). Barker's scholarly contribution places *The Universal Penman* within a tradition of manuals going back to classical times and explores its significance and reception in Georgian Britain. In Chapter 2, 'Authorship in script and print: the example of engraved handwriting manuals of the eighteenth century', Giles Bergel tackles the uncomfortable and complicated relationship between writers and engravers of handwriting manuals. By investigating the division of labour between the

two trades in the production of their joint publications, Bergel uncovers the mutual dependencies between writing master and engraver; describes the different processes that each trade brought to the collaboration; and explores the consequences of those differences for users of their productions. Persida Lazarević Di Giacomo continues the theme of writing manuals in Chapter 3, 'Writing and the preservation of cultural identity: the penmanship manuals of Zaharija Orfelin.' Lazarević Di Giacomo introduces the little-know Serbian writing master Zaharija Orfelin (1726-85) and considers his cultural significance as a preserver and promoter of Serbian linguistic culture and educational values when the country was part of a German dominated Habsburg empire. She discusses how his writing manuals were both a product of and response to the Serbian situation and how they balanced political, orthographical and paleographical concerns in order to reflect the ethos of the Serbs and preserve their cultural identity. Timothy Underhill takes a look at a different sort of writing in Chapter 4, 'The most beautiful hand: John Byrom and the aesthetics of shorthand.' John Byrom (1692-1763), polymathic poet, Fellow of the Royal Society and religious seeker, devised the most important system of shorthand writing prior to Isaac Pitman's *Stenographic Sound-Hand* (1837), on which it had an indirect influence. Underhill's chapter provides an overview of 'Universal English Short-Hand', by focusing on Byrom's preoccupation with visual aspects in conceiving and promoting his shorthand method.

The volume continues by considering the use of both writing and printing not only for personal pleasure but as an arena for public performance and open dispute. Two chapters discuss the materials that evolved to support the private use of pen and print—writing paper, wax seal, pens and ink, type and the printing press—and the role of distribution systems in their success. A further two chapters discuss interactions with printed media, particularly that of newspapers, for public gain. By examining the materiality of the reproduced word, the collective chapters of Ruth Larsen, Caroline Archer-Parré, Joanna Jarvis and Callie Wilkinson reveal much about writers' and printers' private motivations and the social, cultural and economic pressures in the eighteenth century. In Chapter 5, 'An archaeology of letter writing: the correspondence of aristocratic women in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England' Ruth Larsen explores how elite women used private correspondence as a space of performance. Using the epistolary exchanges of a range of different aristocrats, Larsen considers the materiality of the letter, and the ways in which elite women used it to construct their own self-identity. Larsen argues that the letter, as a material object, was an important form of both display and conspicuous consumption, and was central to the

performance of nobility. Caroline Archer-Parré opens the debate between private and public domains in Chapter 6 'Private pleasures and portable presses: do-it-yourself printers in the eighteenth-century.' Here, Archer-Parré considers how non-indentured individuals began to infiltrate the craft and to print for pleasure and sometimes for profit. She discusses the changing complexion of the lay printer; reflects on what they produced, their motivations for so doing, and the intellectual and technological environment that enabled the emergence of the private printer and how they blurred the demarcations between the professional and the layman between public and private. The tension between the individualistic and the uniform, between the private and the public is a theme continued by Joanna Jarvis in Chapter 7, 'Performance and print culture: two eighteenth-century actresses and their image control.' Jarvis recounts how, for two celebrity actresses, Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) and Mary Robinson (*c.* 1757-1800), the attention bestowed upon them by print media, brought an unwelcome increased focus on their private lives; how actresses responded in different ways to this censorious public gaze; and the strategies that they employed in an attempt to contain their image and establish their good name. The tension between public and private spheres is further investigated by Callie Wilkinson in Chapter 8, 'Script, print, and the public/private divide: Sir David Ochterlony's dying words.' Here Wilkinson looks at methods of communication in colonial India and the dynamics of concealment and revelation at work. She assesses the relationship between manuscript and print, public and private correspondence, and personal and professional commitments. She demonstrates the ongoing importance of manuscript culture for the dissemination of news and political debate and how both manuscript and print were important instruments for building and defending personal reputations in colonial society.

This volume continues with a look at the connection between print and the physical world; and the role of print in the construction of eighteenth-century cultural identity through the cataloguing intellectual landscapes the classification of material landscapes —social, botanic, and industrial—through the development of new printed materials such as dictionaries, trade-cards, directories and magazines. By deconstructing individual texts, Linda Mugglestone, Elaine Mitchell and Jenni Dixon demonstrate how print helped order and organise the eighteenth-century world. In Chapter 9, 'Identity, enigma, assemblage: John Baskerville's *Vocabulary, or Pocket Dictionary',* Linda Mugglestone considers who was the author of this small, distinct, and distinctive dictionary which had both pragmatic utility, portability, and could be easily and quickly deployed in moments of linguistic uncertainty. Of foremost interest is how the author,

possibly John Baskerville himself, or maybe the educationalist, theologian and scientist, Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), ordered the linguistic world according to 'atheist' principles. Elaine Mitchell, in Chapter 10, 'Marigolds not manufacturing: plants, print and commerce in eighteenth-century Birmingham' considers the ordering of the botanical world. Mitchell describes how print technology was essential to the circulation of new plants and the attendant dissemination of horticultural and botanical knowledge in Birmingham through the production of nursery catalogues, newspaper advertisements, trade cards, instructional books and calendars, plants and print. Print allowed the ordering and classification of the natural world post-Linnaeus and gave agency to the nurseryman in the spread of scientific knowledge. Jenni Dixon, in Chapter 11, 'Tourist experience and the manufacturing town: James Bisset's *Magnificent Directory* of Birmingham' examines how Bisset, the author and publisher of a highly illustrated commercial directory used printed text, poetry and image to promote both himself and Birmingham as 'The Toy Shop of the World'. Dixon explores how he represented Birmingham in print, as the locus of a new industrial civilisation, a place of taste and fashion and a giant museum or cabinet of curiosities, in order to attract visitors and to promote a particular perception of Birmingham manufacturing and its products.

In the penultimate section of this volume, chapters by Robert Thake, Emil Rybczak and Peter Pellizzari consider how the printed word was used to create intellectual, political and cultural identities in eighteenth-century Europe and America. In Chapter 12, 'Forging an identity on the periphery of the Enlightenment: Malta in print in the eighteenth century'. Robert Thake considers how the evolution of texts printed both outside and inside Malta contributed to the emergence of a Maltese national identity based on national memory, its importance in the early history of Christianity and language. In Chapter 13, 'Perceptions of England: the production and reception of English theatrical publications in Germany and the Netherlands during the eighteenth century', Emil Rybczak explores how English playwrights, especially, including but not only Shakespeare, were published, presented and revealed to German and Dutch audiences. The chapter concludes that: 'continental publishers… offered their readers more diverse and affordable collections of English drama printed in English than were available within the British Isles. In Chapter 14 'Print culture and distribution: circulating the *Federalist Papers* in post-revolutionary America' Peter Pellizzari analyses the *Federalist Papers,* a foundation text for American political ideas, not as a piece of intellectual thought but rather as a bibliographic document or physical material artefact.

This is achieved at five separate, yet interrelated levels: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception, and survival. These steps constitute the collection's 'life-cycle' from writer to reader and suggest a new understanding of the historical significance of the *Federalist Papers*, one in which its authorship and production was never guaranteed, its distribution and circulation limited and contingent, and its reception, at first, mixed and later glorified.

Finally, looking forward into the nineteenth century, in Chapter 15, '*The serif-less letters of John Soane'*, Jon Melton examines the evidence for John Soane (1753–1837) as an early pioneer of serif-less lettering in Britain, and the progenitor of the sans serif typefaces of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Melton considers the events that led to Soane's application of serif-less lettering and the reasons he became the principal executor of this radical departure from the roman letter. Melton concludes his chapter, and therefore the volume, with a gaze into the future with the thought that Soane can be seen at a progenitor of all subsequent sans serif typefaces, perhaps their true source, and can therefore be regarded as a 'prophet of modernism.'