The Book in Lyon in the Renaissance

A conference to celebrate 550 years of printing in Lyon

14-15 December 2023 at Enssib

In 1473, the city of Lyon welcomed its first printing press. Under the impetus of Barthélemy Buyer and the printer Guillaume Le Roy, a long history of typographic activity in the city began. Lyon's reputation as a centre of print production gradually grew to become a source of wealth and cultural influence on a national, European and even global scale.

This activity reached its peak in the middle of the sixteenth century. Editions from Lyon, the world's second-largest printing centre, were bought and read in France as well as in the Germanic, Italian and Iberian worlds - and from there exported to the Americas and the rest of the world. This international success, built largely on the quality of Latin printing, was accompanied by an active and creative vernacular production. From poems to songs and musical tablatures, from the writings of Rabelais to the rediscovery of the city's Gallo-Roman heritage, Lyon was a multi-faceted centre characterised by innovation, both technically and in terms of commercial approach and choice of texts published.

To celebrate the contribution made by printing and bookselling to the cultural and economic vitality of the city of Lyon over the last 550 years, the Institut d'Histoire du Livre, in collaboration with the Enssib, the Musée de l'imprimerie et de la communication graphique as well as the IHRIM, Jean-Mabillon and Gabriel Naudé research centres, are organising a conference on books in Renaissance Lyon on 14 and 15 December 2023.

Lyon's printed output in the sixteenth century has been the subject of numerous studies. From the bibliographies of Baudrier and Cartier in the early decades of the twentieth century to the recent works of Gültlingen, the Universal Short Title Catalogue and Lyon 15-16, bibliographic research has
enabled us to determine what was published in Lyon during the Renaissance. Interest in the field of letters has not waned either, as shown by the numerous works on various authors from the period and the controversy surrounding Louise Labé. Major figures in Lyon printing such as Sébastien Gryphe, Jacques Moderne and Claude Nourry have also fascinated researchers. Despite the abundant, multidisciplinary activity embodied by the annual Biblyon meetings, many aspects of the industry and its impact deserve to be better known.

The symposium will seek to shed new light on some of these characteristics. While the conference is open to papers on a range of subjects relating to Lyon’s printing and book trade, the scientific committee particularly encourages proposals on the following themes:

- International aspects, whether in the analysis of the men and women active in the book industry or in the distribution of copies and the interaction between publishing houses in Lyon and elsewhere.
- The economic impact of publishing in Lyon - the financing of publishing, companies, fairs, direct and indirect repercussions.
- Books and people: the place of women, the social organisation of the trade, buyers and their libraries.
- The materiality of editions and volumes: the creation of editions, their printing and illustration, their binding, the formation of collections, their use, and lost (and found) books.

The proceedings of the conference will be published in the collection of the Institut d’Histoire du Livre by ENS éditions. The deadline for submitting proposals for papers is 31 August 2023. They should be sent to the following email address: malcolm.walsby@enssib.fr. The proposals will be evaluated by the scientific committee and a response will be given in the first week of September.

Scientific committee

- Joseph Belletante (Musée de l’imprimerie et de la communication graphique de Lyon)
- Christine Bénévent (Centre Jean-Mabillon, École nationale des chartes)
- Michèle Clément (IHRIM, Université Lyon 2)
- Michel Jourde (IHRIM, ENS Lyon)
- Malcolm Walsby (Centre Gabriel Naudé, Enssib)