

Tools of Transmission: The Development of the Monthly Periodical in Ireland, Scotland and America, 1770 - 1830

Project Aims

The objective of this project is to complete a study in the comparative history of monthly periodicals published in Ireland, Scotland and America. This study will focus on the periodical publications and publishers in the cities of Dublin, Edinburgh and Philadelphia.

This research will facilitate a better understanding of the development of the Irish monthly periodical, and its impact on political, cultural and social issues in Ireland. It will also make broader conclusions about the role of the monthly periodical in the transmission of print culture and ideas in the Atlantic world.



Print Culture in the Atlantic World

This history of printing and publishing has tended to be set in firmly national boundaries, or in a simple diffusionist model, with London as the unchallenged centre of development in the English-speaking world. The use of the Atlantic as a unit of study helps to shift the traditional scholarly emphasis away from terrestrial national margins and the use of the monthly periodical focuses the research on medium that was easily adapted and imitated to suit various national demands. This broad approach allows for the transatlantic interactions, fostered by the movement of people and print, to be historically explored. This approach also allows for a realistic interpretation of the influence of each print culture upon the other.

The Monthly Periodical in Ireland, Scotland and America



Anti-Union political sketch
Hibernian Magazine, 1799

This project is structured in three sections. The first addresses the development of the Irish monthly periodical in chronological and thematic sections. With c.90 monthly periodicals being published in Ireland in the period 1770-1830, their content provides extensive primary material for consideration and comment. The second section of the research contextualizes these developments in the Atlantic world, with particular case studies of Irish and Scottish book trade personnel and their involvement with the production of periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic.



Mathew Carey,
Irish publisher
and exile



The third section of this study will construct a more representative and realistic role for the monthly periodical as a genre of print culture in the long eighteenth century. This period witnessed the emergence of a public sphere which created an international cultural space that facilitated challenges to religious hegemony and elite learning. Monthly periodicals constituted an important printed medium through which these national and international debates were carried out.

Johanna Archbold



Johanna Archbold completed a double honours degree in Irish and History at TCD (2003) and she is currently working towards her PhD at the Centre for Irish-Scottish Studies. This research constitutes one element of the Irish-Scottish research programme, funded by the PRTL from 2003 to 2006. Johanna has received other awards from the Bibliographical Society and the Reese Company Fellowship of the Library Company of Philadelphia to further her research. She has also co-edited, with Shane Murphy et al., a volume of postgraduate papers, "Beyond the Anchoring Grounds: More Cross-currents in Irish and Scottish Studies". (Belfast: Cló Ollscoille na Banríona, 2005).



This project has interdisciplinary supervision from Prof David Dickson, School of History, Dr Aileen Douglas, School of English and Dr Charles Benson, Early Printed Books.



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Exploring Tools of Transmission

the Human Condition

