COMMUNITIES of PRINT
Authors, Readers, Printers & Sellers in the Early Modern World

A CONFERENCE IN MEMORY OF NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS
AND JAMES K. MCCONICA

Date of Event: 26-28 September 2024
Location: University of Toronto

The Renaissance explosion of print opened up a world of books navigated by authors, artists, printers, booksellers, and readers. Together they created communities of print that reached back to the classical past as they stretched ahead to the future and began moving around the globe. Printing triggered intellectual convergences and ruptures, made and broke fortunes, sparked technological and educational innovations, facilitated scholarly activity and exchange, and turned paper into a vital commodity. The printing press animated communities that were intensely local and expansively global, connecting their members through rivers of ink and reams of paper. It’s long been a commonplace that the Renaissance and Reformation are unthinkable without printing, but our understanding of its impact has expanded as we’ve considered mobility and migration, technology and media, gender and race, sense and space – all have expanded how we understand communities of print emerging and functioning.

This conference is organized by the Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium (TRRC) to honour the legacy of Natalie Zemon Davis and James K. McConica. As young scholars new to Toronto, they co-founded the TRRC in 1964 and through it created a vibrant community; both Natalie and Jim passed away in 2023. Books and printing were at the heart of their own work. Davis’s pioneering studies on printers and booksellers in Lyon opened a world of research into social dynamics that was deeply rooted in anthropological methods. McConica’s studies of Renaissance humanism encompassed authors like Erasmus and led directly to the influential Collected Works of Erasmus Project, which he steered for many years. Together they attracted scholars from diverse disciplines and areas of expertise to forge a local community based on fellowship and research. This conference, to be held on the 60th anniversary of their founding of the TRRC, aims to honour their ground-breaking role in the TRRC by inviting papers on some of the themes and subjects that animated their work and the community they fostered. Our intention is to produce a publication based upon this event.

We invite proposals for papers on one (or more) of the following themes:

Themes
- Writers and Printers
- Communities of Scholars
- Technologies of Knowledge Communication
- Knowledge in the Global Sphere
- Faith and Knowledge – Affirmations and Disruptions
- On the Margins of Print? Gender, Race, and Identity
- Print & Power: Propaganda and Policing

Submission of proposals
Proposals must include abstracts of no more than 150 words and a one-page CV sent to Megan Armstrong marmstr@mcmaster.ca No later than 1 March 2024.