

*The Intermediality of Early Modern Communication. An Introduction**

by Daniel Bellingradt - Massimo Rospocher

Abstract

Despite its current ubiquity in many academic fields, the notion of intermediality is hardly new and the awareness of medial interdependence has been a commonplace that goes back at least as far as classical Antiquity. The introduction to this special issue examines the long (and sometimes ambiguous) history of the relationships and the interactions between written and spoken words, pictures, sound, music and performance. In this context, we suggest a systemic approach to media and communication history that moves away from discussions of the relative influence of one medium at the expense of another and instead considers patterns of interaction, interactivity and complementarity between them. After an overview of various definitions and theoretical approaches, we focus on intermedia objects, practices and actors in order to illuminate the dynamics of early modern intermediality.

Keywords: Early Modern Communication; Intermediality; Media Ensemble; Multimediality; Transmediality.

L'intermedialità della comunicazione in età moderna. Un'introduzione

Nonostante la sua attuale ubiquità in molti ambiti accademici, la nozione di intermedialità è tutt'altro che nuova, laddove la consapevolezza dell'interdipendenza mediale è un luogo comune che risale almeno all'antichità. L'introduzione a questo fascicolo esamina la lunga (e talvolta ambigua) storia delle relazioni e delle interazioni tra parole scritte e parlate, immagini, suono,

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musica e performance. In questo contesto, viene qui proposto un approccio sistemico alla storia dei media e della comunicazione, una prospettiva che si discosta dalle discussioni sull'influenza di uno strumento comunicativo sull'altro e considera invece i modelli di interazione, interattività e complementarità tra i vari media. Dopo una panoramica sulle definizioni di "intermedialità" e sugli approcci teorici, in questa sede ci si concentra su oggetti, pratiche e attori per illuminare le dinamiche dell'intermedialità nella prima età moderna.

Parole chiave: Comunicazione nella prima età moderna; Intermedialità; Media Ensemble; Multimedialità; Transmedialità.

Introduction

Nowadays, intermediality is an internationally recognized interdisciplinary research field with academic research institutes, specialized journals and editorial series¹. Despite its current ubiquity in many academic fields, the notion of intermediality is hardly new. One of the earliest uses of the term «intermedium» has been traced back to an essay of the English Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (*On Edmund Spenser*, 1812), while the word intermediality itself seems to have been employed for the first time in 1983 by the literary theorist Hansen-Löve to encapsulate the interrelations between literature and the visual arts². Apart from its ety-

1. Among the research centers: *The Center for Intermediality Studies in Graz (CIMIG)* is based at the University of Graz and the *Center du recherche sur l'intermédialité/Center for Research on Intermediality (CRI)* at the University of Montréal, Canada. The book series «Studies in Intermediality» is published by Brill. Among the academic journals, «Intermédialités. Histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques/Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies» is focused on intermedia artistic practices, while «Word & Image. A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry» is concerned with the interaction between verbal and visual languages.

2. A.A. Hansen-Löve, *Intermedialität und Intertextualität: Probleme der Korrelation von Wort- und Bildkunst – Am Beispiel der russischen Moderne*, in S. Wolf (ed.), *Dialog der Texte: Hamburger Kolloquium zur Intertextualität*, Wien, Wiener

mology and its recent academic trajectory, the phenomenon of intermediality obviously has a much longer history, going back at least as far as classical Antiquity. From the Greek lyric poet Simonides of Ceos (late 6th century BCE) or Plutarch's descriptions of «painting [as] silent poetry, and poetry [as] speaking painting»³ to Thoinot Arbeau's (1589) characterization of «dancing [as] a kind of mute rhetoric»⁴, the awareness of medial interdependence has been a commonplace in many epochs and historical communication systems.

Based on the assumption that the various media do not operate on their own, but always exist in complex communication systems and therefore are interrelated with each other, in the last two decades communication and media historians have been emphasizing the importance of studying each medium in relation to others. Since the seminal works of Marshall McLuhan⁵, but also of historians of contemporary media such as Peppino Ortoleva and scholars of premodern communication like Robert Darnton, expressions like *media system*, *media ensemble* or *media ecosystem/ecology* have become increasingly familiar to many historians⁶. Using these

Slawistischer Almanach, 1983, pp. 291-360. On the impact and richness of analyzing verbal and visual signs together – interpreted as intermediality – see, for example, the research on «iconotexts» and «Bild-Text-Kommunikation»: T. Straßner (ed.), *Text-Bild-Kommunikation. Bild-Text-Kommunikation*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2002; P. Wagner (ed), *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1996; A. Montandon (ed.), *Iconotextes*, Paris, Ophry, 1990; M. Heusser (ed.), *Text and Visuality*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1999. For more literature on the topic, see for example: R.A. Horstkotte – L. Karin (eds.), *Lesen ist wie Sehen: Intermediale Zitate in Bild und Text*, Köln, Böhlau, 2006.

3. L. Barkan, *Mute Poetry, Speaking Pictures*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013.

4. M. Marcsek-Fuchs, *Dance and British Literature: An Intermedial Encounter (Theory, Typology, Case Studies)*, Leiden, Rodopi, 2015, p. 59.

5. «The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph» (M. McLuhan, *Understanding media: The Extensions of Man*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964, p. 23).

6. P. Ortoleva, *Mediastoria: Mezzi di comunicazione e cambiamento sociale nel mondo contemporaneo*, Parma, Patriche, 1995; R. Darnton, *An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, «The American Historical Review», 105, 1 (2000), pp. 1-35. For the early modern media system, see J. Arndt – E.-B. Körber, *Das Mediensystem im Alten Reich der Frühen Neuzeit (1600-*

expressions signaled an interpretation of media as being relational, and this commonly agreed insight eventually led to further contemplation of how to conceptualize this observation. One main result of this, however, was a plurality of interdisciplinary approaches trying to characterize the observed media relations in question. In general, the emphasis of scholarly attention has shifted within many disciplines from studies of individual media towards a more inclusive approach to early modern communication⁷, and from the analysis of media structures to media practices⁸.

One further step taken by recent studies on the history of communication has been to focus not just on the juxtaposition and coexistence of different media, but also on the constant interplay, hybridity, and complementarity of acoustic, oral, performative, sensorial, visual, written and printed means of communication⁹. Concepts such as *media convergence* or *media complementarity* have emerged in various subfields of media history and communication studies, and eventually been re-used and re-transferred to historical approaches to communication¹⁰. Early modern

1750), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. For the concept of media ensemble as a heuristic tool for communication history, see D. Bellingradt, *Annäherungen an eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, «Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte», 20 (2018), pp. 16-21, esp. 14. About an original concept of media ecology, see McLuhan, *Understanding media*.

7. For an inclusive approach to early modern communication, see D. Bellingradt – M. Rospocher, *A History of Early Modern Communication*, «Annali dell’Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico», 2 (2019), pp. 7-22.

8. On this new paradigm in media research, see N. Couldry, *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*, Cambridge, Polity, 2012.

9. Theoretical statements like the recent one from H.G. Bastiansen, that the main goal of communication history should be analyzing the «totality that emerges when one looks at the various inter-connected mass media of the past and focuses on the relations between them» (D. Bastiansen, *Media History and the Study of Media System*, in «Media History», 14, 1, 2008, pp. 95-112: 104) have been used in early modern historiography, as the following introduction will be dealing with in more detail.

10. See K. Kleinen von Königsłow – K. Förster (eds.), *Medienkonvergenz und Medienkomplementarität aus Rezeptions- und Wirkungsperspektive*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2014. For historical approaches explicitly and implicitly using these ideas, see: F.A. Marotti – M.D. Bristol, *Introduction*, in A.F. Marotti – M.D. Bristol (eds.), *Print, Manuscript, and Performance. The Changing Relations of the Media in Early*

communication, therefore, is no longer represented simply as a multi-media system – where print, manuscript, orality, music, performance, sense and images coexist – but rather as an intermedia ecosystem – where media interact, overlap and modify each other, reallocating themselves within the system after the advent of a new medium (*Remediation*)¹¹. In line with this trend, new analytical terms have evolved within early modern historiography: expressions such as *media mixtures*¹², *media alliances*¹³, *media interrelation*¹⁴, *media interplay*¹⁵, for instance, have been used more frequently in German scholarship.

Combining different approaches, ranging from microhistory (Roth) to linguistic analysis (De Caprio), from religious (Corbellini) and political communication (Schäfer-Griebel) to study of the vocalicity of early modern media (Missfelder), the aim of this collection of essays is to elucidate the mutual influence and interaction between various means of communication in the early modern European *media ensemble* through a series of empirical case studies. Following a more inclusive and dynamic notion of the early modern media system, the collected essays seek to explore a range of important practices and objects of intermediality, and in doing so to address some fundamental questions: Does the choice of either a certain single medium or a set of media influence the ways, impact and spaces of circulation of information and knowledge practices¹⁶? How

Modern England, Columbus, Ohio State University, 2000, pp. 1-31; C. Kiening, *Medialität in mediävistischer Perspektive*, «Poetica», 39, 1/2 (2007), pp. 285-352.

11. J.D. Bolter – R. Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1999; R. Stöber, *What media evolution is: A theoretical approach to the history of new media*, «European Journal of Communication», 4, 19 (2004), pp. 483-505.

12. The expression «Medienmischungen» is used in A. Messerli, *Intermedialität*, in A. Messerli – M. Schilling (eds.), *Die Intermedialität des Flugblatts in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, S. Hirzel Verlag, 2015, pp. 9-24: 9.

13. The term «Medienallianzen» is used in L. Müller, *Weißer Magie: Die Epoche des Papiers*, München, Hanser, 2012, p. 52.

14. The term *media interrelation* («mediale Wechselbeziehungen») is used within German intermediality research fields: see Messerli, *Intermedialität*.

15. This concept («Zusammenspiel verschiedener Medien») is used in T. Eicher, *Was heißt (hier) Intermedialität?*, in T. Eicher – U. Bleckmann (eds.), *Intermedialität: Vom Bild zum Text*, Bielefeld, Aisthesis, pp. 11-28.

16. On information practices: A. Brendecke – M. Friedrich – S. Friedrich (eds.), *Information in der Frühen Neuzeit: Status, Bestände, Strategien*, Berlin, Lit, 2008;

does a change of medium affect the circulation and reception of the message? What happens, for instance, when ideas or texts are translated from their written or printed context to other forms, such as music, performance, images or orality? In answering these questions, we argue that one of the advantages of an intermedia approach is to offer a less linear explanation of early modern media and communication, avoiding teleological, evolutionary or revolutionary narratives of media changes and media practices¹⁷.

1. Defining intermedialities

Intermediality is one of the most used (or abused) and least defined concept in Media Studies and communication history¹⁸. At present, in fact, a fully agreed definition of intermediality does not exist. The effect is a pragmatic use of this term, often adopted as a buzzword, an analytical *passe-partout* or an ‘umbrella-term’, which includes various subcategories (e.g. multimediality, plurimediality or transmediality).

In general terms, intermediality originally was conceived to designate phenomena that transgress perceived boundaries between different media conventionally seen as distinct from each other¹⁹. More precise definitions have been suggested, in particular within the field of modern media studies. Klaus Bruhn Jensen wrote:

A. Blair – P. Duguid, A.S. Göing – A. Grafton (eds.), *Information: A Historical Companion*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2021.

17. A similar anti-teleological use of the notion of intermediality is evident also in contemporary communication studies: see, for instance: J. Herkman – T. Hujanen – P. Oinonen (eds.), *Intermediality and Media Change*, Tampere, Tampere University Press, 2012.

18. I.O. Rajewsky, *Intermedialität*, Tübingen, Francke, 2002; J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität und Medienhistoriographie*, in J. Paech – J. Schröter (eds.), *Intermedialität analog/digital: Theorien – Methoden – Analysen*, München, Wilhelm Fink, 2008, pp. 31-46; A. Shail, *Intermediality: Disciplinary Flux or Formalist Retrenchment*, «Early Popular Visual Culture», 8, 1 (2010), pp. 3-15; G. Rippl (ed.), *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – Image – Sound – Music*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2015.

19. Rajewsky, *Intermedialität*.

Intermediality refers to the interconnectedness of modern media of communication. As means of expression and exchange, the different media depend on and refer to each other, both explicitly and implicitly; they interact as elements of particular communicative strategies; and they are constituents of a wider cultural environment²⁰.

Even in the recently-developed research field of digital media history, where the combination, interconnectedness, mutual interaction, and overlapping of different media is obviously a critical matter, the concept of intermediality remains an elusive one. For example, Gabriele Balbi and Paolo Magaudda have recently used

the term *intermediality* to describe a fundamentally important media change under the promptings of digital innovation. The purpose of this term is to highlight the fact that devices, markets, aesthetics and media uses previously differentiated in specific media sectors have begun to interweave and increasingly depend on one another. The aim is thus to underline the interconnectedness of contemporary digital media²¹.

In the last two decades, there have also been theoretical efforts to explore and define the notion of intermediality among historians of early modern Europe. This has been the case particularly within German-speaking historiography²². Birgit Emich's use of the term *Intermedialität* in 2008, for instance,

20. The author then isolated three different conceptions of intermediality: «First [...] intermediality is the combination and adaptation of separate material vehicles of representation and reproduction [...]. Second, the term denotes communication through several sensory modalities at once [...]. Third, intermediality concerns the interrelations between media as institutions in society [...]»; K. Bruhn Jensen, *Intermediality*, in W. Donsbach (ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2008, pp. 2385-2387.

21. G. Balbi – P. Magaudda, *A History of Digital Media: An Intermedia and Global Perspective*, New York, Routledge, 2018, p. 156.

22. J. Helbig (ed.), *Intermedialität: Theorie und Praxis eines interdisziplinären Forschungsgebiets*, Berlin, Schmidt, 1998; B. Emich, *Bildlichkeit und Intermedialität in der frühen Neuzeit: Eine interdisziplinäre Spurensuche*, «Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung», 35 (2008), pp. 31-56; D. Bellingradt, *Periodische Zeitung und akzidentielle Flugpublizistik: Zu den intertextuellen, interdependenten und intermedialen Momenten des frühneuzeitlichen Medienverbundes*, in H. Böning – V. Bauer (eds.), *Die Entstehung des Zeitungswesens im 18. Jahrhundert: Ein neues Medium*

was one of the earliest explicit adoptions and critical discussions within the field of early modern historical studies. Emich's broad definition of intermediality concerns

phenomena that cross the boundaries between media: boundaries between media in the broader sense, that is, between sign systems such as image, text and language, but also boundaries between media in the narrower, technically-material sense such as leaflets and pamphlets²³.

More specifically, but mostly referring to the interaction of images and printed texts, she distinguished three different forms of intermediality taking place in the early modern period: multimediality, media transfer or transformation, and intermedia references. Further developing the binary combination between visual and textual media, and focusing on the dynamic transmission and reception of Augustinian ideas in the pre-modern period, Karla Pollmann and Meredith Gill adopted a similar functional definition of intermediality, but including oral and performative media, such as sermons, plays, and music. They explicitly and implicitly engaged with the concepts of both *intermediality*, which «refers to the juxtaposition of at least two different media in the reception of ideas», and *transmediality*, which «denotes the transfer of content from one medium to the other»²⁴.

In all these functional definitions and approaches to past and contemporary *media convergence* and *media complementarity*, the combination or interaction of individual media forms is described in terms of patterns of cooperating, co-existing, amplifying, influencing, or competing with each other. We set out to create this special issue with a new agenda. As we argue

und seine Folgen und das Kommunikationssystem der Frühen Neuzeit, Bremen, Lumière, 2011, pp. 57-78. Messerli and Schilling, *Die Intermedialität des Flugblatts*; J. Robert (ed.), *Intermedialität in der Frühen Neuzeit: Formen, Funktionen, Konzepte*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2017.

23. Our translation: «Intermedialität bezeichnet Phänomene, die Grenzen zwischen Medien überschreiben: Grenzen zwischen Medien im weiteren Sinne, das heißt zwischen Zeichensystemen wie Bild, Text und Sprache, aber auch Grenzen zwischen Medien im engeren, technisch-materiell definierten Sinn wie etwa Flugblätter und Flugschriften» (Emich, *Bildlichkeit und Intermedialität*, p. 35).

24. K. Pollmann – M.J. Gill, *Introduction*, in K. Pollmann – M.J. Gill (eds.), *Augustine Beyond the Book: Intermediality, Trans-mediality, and Reception*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2012, pp. 1-13, here p. 2.

in the next section, we approach intermediality by using a systemic view that enables us to consider the interaction of a wide range of past media.

2. Approaching early modern intermediality

In order to reconstruct the intermediality of early modern communication, firstly it is necessary to overcome disciplinary divisions that have separated many researchers in the past. Secondly, we believe that a more systemic approach to early modern intermediality constitutes a useful heuristic start. In a systemic interpretation, mediality and therefore also intermediality is a state of communication that can be and was observed, recognized or experienced multi-sensorially²⁵. When communication is understood as the original moments of producing media²⁶, then intermediality also is always the result of

25. On approaches to mediality within early modern communication history: G. Haug-Moritz – L. Schilling, *Médialité et interpretation contemporaine des premières guerres de Religion*, in G. Haug-Moritz – L. Schilling (eds.), *Médialité et interpretation contemporaine des premières guerre de Religion*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 7-21; A. Schäfer-Griebel, *Die Medialität der Französischen Religionskriege: Frankreich und das Heilige Römische Reich 1589*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2018, pp. 27-35; J.-D., Müller, *Medialität: Frühe Neuzeit und Medienwandel*, in K. Stegbauer – H. Vögel – M. Waltenberger (eds.), *Kulturwissenschaftliche Frühneuzeitforschung*, Berlin, Schmidt, 2004, pp. 49-70; R. Wetzell – F. Flückiger, *Introduction: Pour une approche croisée de la médialité médiévale*, in R. Wetzell – F. Flückiger (eds.), *Au-delà de l'illustration: Texte et image au Moyen Âge, approches méthodologiques et pratiques*, Zürich, Chronos, 2009, pp. 7-19. On the potential of Sensory History in general, see: M. Jay, *In the Realm of the Senses: An Introduction*, «The American Historical Review», 116/2 (2011), pp. 307-315; A. Cowan – J. Steward (eds.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture since 1500*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007; M.M. Smith, *A Sensory History Manifesto*, University Park (PA), The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021; and with regard to sensorial memory practices in European Early Modernity: A. Wood, *The Memory of the People: Custom and Popular Senses of the Past in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013; E. Kuijpers – J. Pollmann – J. Müller – J. van der Steen (eds.), *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, Brill, 2013.

26. Bellingradt – Rospocher, “A History”; T. Mock, “Was ist ein Medium? Eine Unterscheidung kommunikations- und medienwissenschaftlicher Grundverständnisse eines zentralen Begriffs», «Publizistik», 51, 2 (2006), pp. 183-200: 188.

a human communicative activity by individuals or a group – no matter whether intentionally conceived or not. And while every media-producing act of communication results in communication flows – or so-called streams of media –, it seems helpful to access intermedia situations or processes by firstly assessing the different media involved, secondly by analyzing the additional or new quality of the interaction or coexistence created, and thirdly by considering the temporal dimension: the special follow-up communications' dynamic of intermedia.

To assess the different media involved in an intermedia state of communication means understanding the observed situation or process in a multi-sensory way. Intermediality may mean a great deal – from verbal-acoustic to aspects of visual communication and reception (in print, handwritten, drawn), from olfactory to performative acts – and all these single entities are important when it comes to understanding the combination of two or more elements²⁷. Such an all-encompassing approach builds on a preliminary conceptualization of the *media ensemble* of a specific situation or historical process. Among others, the authors of this introduction have elsewhere suggested the idea that

the *media ensemble* (in German *Medienverbund*) of a specific situation or historical process is to be understood as a multisensory ensemble to be recognized/observed/accessed, which has to be interpreted as an embedded multimedia or intermedia entity that includes all the different aspects of communication²⁸.

Alexandra Schäfer-Griebel's contribution in this special issue explores these directions while arguing for an integrated approach of mediated communication.

27. On the need of a media combining approach to communication history, see M. Zierold, *Mass media, Media Culture and Mediasation*, in B. Neumann – A. Nünning (eds.), *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 337-352.

28. Bellingradt – Rospocher, *A History*, p. 11. The idea of paying attention to all media forms in a certain situation or process was suggested by Haug-Moritz and Lothar Schilling when they argued in 2014 for an analysis of the «constellation médiatique spécifique» (Haug-Moritz – Schilling, *Médialité et interprétation contemporaine*, p. 11). Recently, Alexandra Schäfer-Griebel, who contributes to this edited volume, argued in the same direction.

The second step asks if and to what effect we can observe an additional or novel quality of the intermedia situation or process in question. Such an assessment is important, because intermediality is not necessarily something better or more intense or powerful; intermediality can also be an obstacle or irrelevant for specific communication dynamics. The third suggested step is to focus on the temporal factor of intermediality: this attention to temporality aims to understand both the media and social effect of situations or processes of intermediality. For example, a temporal media effect of an early modern newsletter being sung aloud to an heterogeneous audience – such as a ballad with a catchy melody and a memorable refrain – would likely have accelerated subsequent communications about the content in conversations, handwritten exchanges or printed texts, potentially reaching more communities and different publics, and enabling additional, new moments of communicative processes and new acts of communication in response («media echoes»)²⁹. As can be seen in this case, certain intermedia coalitions might increase and speed up the societal circulation of certain media forms and the information they transmit. Among others, Chiara De Caprio, who is contributing to this special issue, highlights such intermedia flows and their echoing effects.

29. D. Bellingradt, *The Dynamic of Communication and Media Recycling in Early Modern Europe: Popular Prints as Echoes and Feedback Loops*, in J. Salzman – M. Rospocher – H. Salmi, *Crossing Borders, Crossing Cultures: Popular Print in Europe, 1450-1900*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2019, pp. 9-32; J. Arndt – E.-B. Körber (eds.), *Das Mediensystem im Alten Reich der Frühen Neuzeit (1600-1750)*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. For an interactionist perspective in communication history, see E. Kulczycki, *Communication History and Its Research Subject*, «Annals of the University of Craiova – Philosophy Series», 33, 1 (2014), pp. 132-155; Bellingradt – Rospocher, *A History*. The idea of an interactionist approach is resonant within communication studies: S. Rafaeli, *Interactivity: From New Media to Communication*, in R.P. Hawkins – J.M. Wiemann – S. Pingree (eds.), *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, Newbury Park, Sage, 1988, pp. 110-134; J.W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, New York, Routledge, 2009; R.T. Craig, *Communication Theory as a Field*, «Communication Theory», 9, 2 (1999), pp. 119-161; W.B. Pearce – V.E. Cronen, *Communication, Action, and Meaning: The Creation of Social Realities*, New York, Praeger, 1980.

3. Early Modern intermedia objects and practices

As recent scholarship on the history of pre-modern communication has begun to highlight some of the above-mentioned theoretical aspects, we intend to further illuminate these aspects by adopting a systemic view of intermediality. All contributions in this special issue aim to put this theory into practice, historicizing an abstract conception of intermediality through a series of particular material artifacts, communicative practices, social actors and urban spaces. In this last part of the introduction, we shed light on exemplary objects that are centered around paper-based print and manuscript ‘books’ and the accompanying intermedia practices evolving around them within (urban) social spaces. Through these examples we will demonstrate how intermediality was integral to the communication flows and the *media ensemble* of Pre-modern Europe, as communication was conveyed in and to countless combinations of intended and actual publics, meanings, and effects, and in myriad forms, including images, music, sounds, performances, rituals, objects, and spoken, sung, handwritten, and printed words interacting with each other.

‘Books’ in early modern Europe came in various forms, circulated under different names (e.g. broadsheets, pamphlets, newsletters, prints, manuscripts) and had many functions depending on genre, price, and content. From the fourteenth century onwards one basic feature of all the various objects subsumed under the umbrella term ‘book’ was a material one – namely being mostly paper-based artefacts. Another basic feature was the combination of textual and visual arrangements, and of blank and filled spaces alike. These layouts allowed users to experience these artefacts in intermedia ways. For example, the German *Schreibkalender*, a popular almanac reaching very large audiences from the 1540s onwards, offered empty space next to the printed texts and images for the reader to take notes. These interfoliated blank leaves gave the *Schreibkalender* its name (meaning a calendar to insert handwritten notes)³⁰, and made it an object designed for textual interactions between print and manuscript (Fig. 1). Further proof of the fruitful connection and interrelation between these two media is provided by the Italian *almanacchi* (almanacs), which since the seventeenth century could also be

30. K.-D. Herbst, *Der Schreibkalender der Frühen Neuzeit und seine Autoren: Ergebnisse der Forschung: Mit einer Personalbibliografie seit 2006*, «Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte», 20 (2018), pp. 94-124.

partly interfoliated with white leaves for handwritten annotations or drawings³¹. Early modern notebooks too intentionally left empty space – a blank part of the page’s layout – making these book variations intermedia objects, encouraging the combination of different media practices such as collage, print, drawing and writing³².

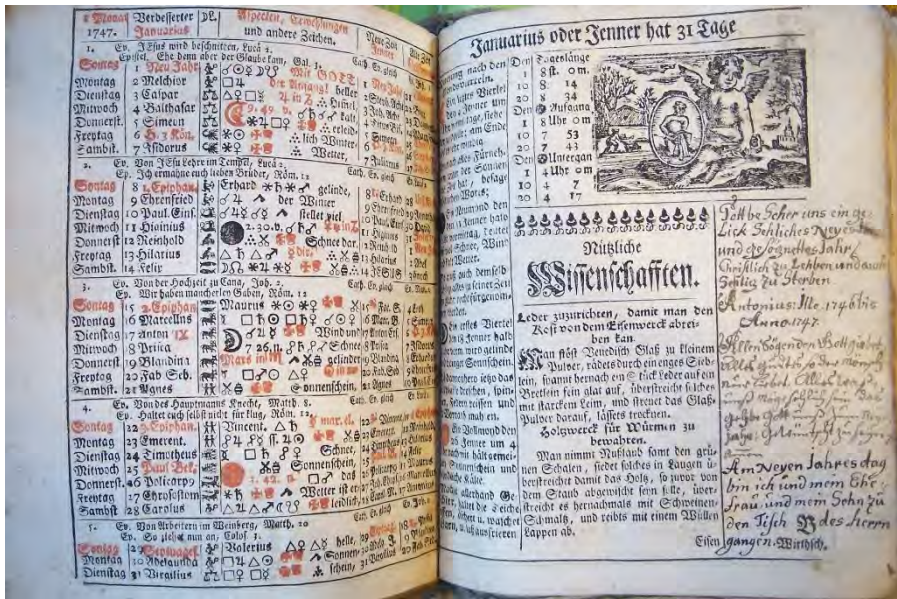


Fig. 1 – Page showing the details for January 1747 in the German Schreibkalender from Matthäus Promeisel (pseud.) “Der rechte Culmbachische Haus= und Wirtschafts=Calender für 1747” (Kulmbach 1746). Credits: Klaus-Dieter Herbst.

31. L. Braidà, *Dall’almanacco all’agenda: lo spazio per le osservazioni del lettore*, «ACME: Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell’Università degli Studi di Milano», 51, 3 (1998), pp. 137-167.

32. On notebooks and the usages of paper blank spaces, see: R.R. Yeo, *Notebooks, English Virtuosi, and Early Modern Science*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2014; M.D. Eddy, *The Nature of Notebooks: How Enlightenment Schoolchildren Transformed the Tabula Rasa*, «Journal of British Studies», 57, 2 (2018), pp. 275-307; on the intersection of printing and writing, see A. Douglas, *Work in Hand: Script, Print, and Writing, 1690-1840*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

In the vein of ideas and concepts developed within literary studies (‘intertextuality’)³³ and visual studies (‘interpictoriality’)³⁴, research on textual and visual interplay in early modern books has grown steadily over the last decades³⁵. The single-leaf broadside (Fig. 2) was a widespread print medium since the early sixteenth century, often addressing both illiterate and elite audiences, it characteristically had visual and textual elements offering interconnected sets of meaning and references³⁶.

The text and image parts were related to each other, in direct and indirect ways, ranging from “footnotes” to symbolical references. A broadside was an extraordinary intermedia artefact. Getting the message, or trying to get the message, of an early modern broadside was an intermedia experience of interpretation, even more complex when music and rhymes were included as a way to reach larger audiences. In this respect, historians working on broadside ballads must bear in mind the interaction of music, images and texts, by studying the meaning of lyrics in close association with the tunes and illustrations that accompanied them³⁷.

33. For literary studies see the overview by U. Fix, *Aspekte der Intertextualität*, in K. Brinker – G. Antos – W. Heinemann – S.F. Sager (eds.), *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik: Ein internationales Handbuch: 1. Halbband*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2000, pp. 449-457.

34. On the initial theorization of interpictoriality (sometimes also referred to as interpictoriality or Interkonizität), see V. von Rosen, *Interpikturalität*, in U. Pfisterer (ed.), *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft: Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, Stuttgart, Metzler, 2003; G. Isekenmeier (ed), *Interpiktoralität: Theorie und Geschichte der Bild-Bild-Bezüge*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2013. For a long-term and cross-cultural influence analysis of images set in relation to other images: H. Kessler – J.-M. Spieser – G. Wolf – A.O. Poilpré, *Le statut de l’image religieuse au Moyen Âge, entre Orient et Occident*, «Perspective», 1 (2009), pp. 82-90.

35. See, for instance, J. Haubenreich, *The press, the Mirror, and the Window: The Intermedial Construction of the Reader in Sebastian Brant’s Ship of Fools*, «Word and Image», 56, 4 (2016), pp. 375-392.

36. A. Pettegree (ed), *Broadsheets: Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*, Leiden, Brill, 2017; W. Harms – M. Schilling (ed.), *Das illustrierte Flugblatt der frühen Neuzeit: Traditionen – Wirkungen – Kontexte*, Stuttgart, Hirzel, 2008; D. Bellingradt, *Das Flugblatt im Medienverbund der Frühen Neuzeit: Bildtragendes Mediengut und Recycling-Produkt*, «Daphnis», 48, 4 (2020), pp. 516-538.

37. Exemplary studies are: U. McIlvenna, *Singing the News of Death: Execution Ballads in Europe 1500-1900*, forthcoming; P. Fumerton, *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England: Moving Media, Tactical Publics*, Philadelphia, University



Fig. 2 – Combining text, image and musical allusions the broadside (n.p. 1631) satirizes the fictitious “General Lautenschläger” by comparing his military activity with his unsuccessful performances as lute-player. Credits: Public Domain (<https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/22105/3>).

Intermedia cultural artifacts such as broadside ballads, simultaneously vocal and written media, employing also music and woodcuts, epitomize the dynamic process of media transfer and provide illuminating insights into early modern society, as shown by Jan-Friedrich Missfelder’s contribution to this special issue³⁸. Broadside, moreover, were ‘recycled’ prod-

of Pennsylvania Press, 2020; K.R. Larson, *The Matter of Song in Early Modern England: Texts in and of the Air*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019; C. Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

38. The printed broadside ballad has been the focus of recent study in various European contexts: P. Fumerton – A. Guerrini, *Ballads and Broadside in Britain, 1500-1800*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; A. McShane, *Political Broadside Ballads of*

ucts of the contemporary media system. They usually derived their content (both ideas and source materials for text and images) from other textual and visual sources available to the author, image-maker or publisher in question, and functioned as a textual and visual influence on other media forms, mainly printed variations of the *media ensemble*³⁹. As a medium influenced by and influencing others (and triggering further oral circulation, consumption and reception of the encoded contents), the text-and-image product ‘broadsheet’ was a relational and imbedded intermedium par excellence.

Experiencing the combination of text and image in a book format was a widespread cultural practice in early modern Europe, for example in mnemotechnical practices in schooling, education and in the scholarly world⁴⁰. These kinds of “visual thinking” approaches were targeted to small and selected audiences of the chosen “book” object, and the intermedia benefit of thinking visually (including textual parts) and trying to

Seventeenth-Century England: A Critical Bibliography, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2011; I. Fenlon, *Sung Histories: The Battle of Lepanto between Orality and Print*, in P.V. Bohlman – M. Sorce Keller (eds.), *Antropologia della musica nelle culture mediterranee: interpretazione, performance, identità*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2009, pp. 165-178; F. Alazard, *Le Lamento dans l'Italie de la Renaissance: 'Pleure, belle Italie, jardin du monde'*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010; R.W. Brednich, *Die Liedpublizistik im Flugblatt des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts: 1. Abhandlung*, Baden-Baden, Korner, 1974.

39. See Bellingradt, *The Dynamic of Communication*; D. Gruber, *Frühneuzeitlicher Wissenswandel: Kometenerscheinungen in der Druckpublizistik des Heiligen Römischen Reiches*, Bremen, Lumière, 2020; A. Schäfer-Griebel, *Die Arbeitspraxis im Nachrichtendruckgewerbe: Religionskriegsnachrichten im Heiligen Römischen Reich um 1590*, «Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte», 20 (2018), pp. 42-70.

40. E. Lamb, *Reading Children in Early Modern Culture*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; D. Vincent, *The Rise of Mass Literacy: Reading and Writing in Modern Europe*, Oxford, Polity Press, 2000; R.A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education, 1500-1800*, London, Routledge, 2016; S. Berger, *The Art of Philosophy: Visual Thinking in Europe from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017; U. Schneider, *Frühe Neuzeit*, in U. Rautenberg – U. Schneider (eds.), *Lesen: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2015, pp. 739-764.

transfer knowledge in a given communication situation⁴¹. Early modern friendship books (*alba amicorum*) represented another typical example of protean intermedia artefacts, based on the text-image relationship and a close interaction between visual and verbal languages (Fig. 3)⁴².



Fig. 3 – Even if *alba amicorum* were usually manuscript, they could sometimes be printed as in this Daniel Meissner's "Thesaurus sapientiae ciuilis, siue, Vitae humanae ac virtutum et vitiorum theatrum..." (Frankfurt, 1626). Credits: Public Domain (<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100319142>).

41. On the theory level: C. Gandelman, *Reading Pictures, viewing texts*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991; S. Horstkotte – K. Leonhard (eds.), *Lesen ist wie Sehen: Intermediale Zitate in Bild und Text*, Köln, Böhlau, 2006.

42. On the text-image intermedial relations, see: G. Rippl. *Literatur und (visuelle) Medien in der frühen Neuzeit*, in V. Nünning (ed.), *Kulturgeschichte der englischen Literatur: Von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart*, Tübingen, Francke, 2005, pp. 36-47; M. Rouse, *Text-Picture Relationships in the Early Modern Period*, in G. Rippl (ed.), *Handbook of Intermediality*, pp. 65-81.

These were blank albums designed to collect signatures, mottoes, coats-of-arms, portraits and visual imagery of acquaintances and encounters as students (but also merchants, artists, and humanists) moved between different places. «Albums were forms of social media that connected individuals to a network, sometimes of strangers», open to future members or readers, using a multimedia combination of languages with a strong interaction between handwritten and printed words and drawn and collected (printed or drawn) images⁴³. Humanists' emblem books performed a similar function representing another example of the textual-visual interplay (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 – Theodorus Cornhartius, “*Emblemata Moralia, Et Oeconomica, De Rerum Vsv Et Abvsu*” (Arnheim, 1609). Street performer and a baker offering goods. The image connects with the moralizing texts on the top. Credits: Public Domain (<http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/258-2-hist-2s/start.htm?image=00002>).

43. B. Wilson, *Social Networking. The ‘Album amicorum’ and Early Modern Public Making*, in M. Rospocher (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2012, pp. 205-223.

Printed objects containing a motto, an image, an epigram and (sometimes) a dedication associated with fellow members of the scholarly community, *Emblemata* represented intermedia dictionaries of human relations⁴⁴.

Obviously, all these material bookish objects, and their related media practices, were not fixed artefacts but moved across time and space. Thus, the media practices and their objects have also been explored within the urban social spaces in which communicative acts happened, as shown by Sabrina Corbellini's analysis of religious communication in this volume. The metaphor of the city as a resonating box has been often employed to describe the urban environment as a theatre of interaction between different media and to promote a spatial approach to mediality⁴⁵. Musicologists, historians, architectural and literary scholars have tried to recapture urban soundscapes - the 'sounds of the city', its ephemeral voices, noises, and music⁴⁶. The result of this rapprochement between sound and space,

44. G. Almási, *The Uses of Humanism: Johannes Sambucus (1531-1584), Andreas Dudith (1533-1589) and the Republic of Letters in East Central Europe*, Leiden, Brill, 2009.

45. D. Bellingradt, *The Early Modern City as a Resonating Box: Media, the Public Sphere and the Urban Space of the Holy Roman Empire, Cologne and Hamburg c. 1700*, «Journal of Early Modern History», 16, 3 (2012), pp. 201-240; F. De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 6.

46. In order to reconstruct early modern soundscapes, musicologists and ethnomusicologists increasingly engage with the work of cultural, social, or political historians and vice versa: B.R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999; K. van Orden, *Music and the Cultures of Print*, New York, Garland, 2000, pp. 271-323; D. Garrioch, *Sounds of the City: The Soundscape of Early Modern Towns*, «Urban History», 30, 1 (2003), pp. 5-25; G. Peters, *The Musical Sound of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons, and Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012; T. Knighton – A. Manzueta-Antiguaita (eds.), *Hearing the City in Early Modern Europe*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2018; I. Fenlon, *Urban Soundscapes*, in I. Fenlon – R. Wistreich (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Sixteenth-Century Music*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019. On the history of sound and audition, see S. Rosenfeld, *On Being Heard: A Case for Paying Attention to the Historical Ear*, «The American Historical Review», 116, 2 (2011), pp. 316-334. A useful resource for early modern soundscapes is the website of the research network <https://emsoundscapes.co.uk>.

has recently produced excellent interdisciplinary research focused on intermedia practices within the sonic environment of cities such as Renaissance Florence and Venice⁴⁷, for instance, but also of early modern Paris and of the urban spaces of the kingdom of Castile between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries⁴⁸.

Many public spaces of Italian cities give us a metaphorical, sensorial and physical representation of that interplay between various media (orality, manuscript, print, sound, but also architecture or sculpture) which characterized early modern communications. The marble hunchbacked statute of the *Gobbo* in Venice, near the Rialto bridge, for instance, was the place used by official criers for making their announcements, but also the location for posting manuscript pasquinades or printed *bandi*, discussing the latest news or buying a cheap pamphlet from a street singer working the busy market area⁴⁹. Similar ‘talking statutes’ are present elsewhere in Italy - such as the famous Pasquino in Rome, the “Men of Stone”

47. K. Colleran, ‘Scampanata at the Widows’: A Case-Study of Sound and Ritual Insult in Cinquecento Florence, «Urban History», 36 (2009), pp. 359-378; D. Howard – L. Moretti, *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Music, Acoustic*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009; P. Canguilhem, *Courtiers and Musicians Meet in the Streets: The Florentine ‘mascherata’ under Cosimo I*, «Urban History», 37, 3 (2010), pp. 464-473; B. Wilson, *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The ‘Cantasi Come’ Tradition*, Florence, Olschki, 2009; Id., *Dominion of the Ear: Singing the Vernacular in Piazza San Martino*, «I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance», 16, 1-2 (2013), pp. 273-287; N. Atkinson, *The Republic of Sound: Listening to Florence at the Threshold of the Renaissance*, «I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance», 16, 1-2 (2013), pp. 57-84; R. Salzberg, *The Sounds of a ‘Migropolis’: Listening to Early Modern Venice*, in C. Cornelissen – B. Kümin – M. Rospocher (eds.), *Migration and the European City: Social and Culture Perspectives from Early Modernity to the Present*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 197-212.

48. N. Hammond, *The Powers of Sound and Song in Early Modern Paris*, The University Park (PA), Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019; G. Coronado Schwindt, *The Social Construction of the Soundscape of the Castilian Cities (15th and 16th Centuries)*, «Acoustic», 3 (2021), pp. 60-77.

49. R. Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014; A. Marzo, *Pasquino e il Gobbo di Rialto*, in C. Damianaki – P. Procaccioli – A. Romano (eds.), *Ex marmore: Pasquini, pasquinisti, pasquinate nell’Europa moderna*, Manziana, Vecchiarelli, 2006, pp. 121-134.

in Milan or the Ludovica in Brescia (Fig. 5) –⁵⁰ and they are quintessentially intermedia cultural objects, intersections of written, architectural, oral and visual forms of communication.



Fig. 5 – Unknown artist, Ludovica della Loggia. Botticino stone, Brescia, Piazza della Loggia, second half of the 16th century. Credits: Enrico Valseriati.

50. E. Valseriati, *Tra Venezia e l'Impero. Dissenso e conflitto politico a Brescia nell'età di Carlo V*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016, pp. 35-36.

Meanwhile, urban history and news history have addressed how public places in cities with printing industries often were prime locations to buy, read, and hear the latest from local and regional (handwritten and printed) newspapers. Studies on public rituals, performances, acoustic communities and aural landscapes, have also contributed to strengthen an intermedia approach to communication in the last decade⁵¹. Combining music and performance, written and oral culture, ceremonies taking place in central public spaces, for instance, are intermedia acts and have been described as «visual drama with highly scripted acts, movements, and rhythms»⁵². An intermedia approach has also been extensively adopted in the field of the history of religious communication, whose analytical focus moved beyond the written word, in order to illustrate the interaction of verbal, visual, and performative media. For instance, within the history of preaching, a closer attention has been paid to the aural and acoustic dimension of the oral circulation of written sermons, analyzing in detail the transition from the church pulpit, or from the *piazza*, to the handwritten or printed page (and vice versa), and focusing on protean figures such as itinerant preachers⁵³. Related to these interactions of verbal, visual, and performative media, studies on early modern media events like public executions or episodes of war, describe in detail the multimedia responses

51. M. Rospocher, *What is the history of Communication? An Early Modernist Perspective*, «Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte», 20 (2018), pp. 9-15; A. Farge, *Essai pour une histoire des voix au dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, Bayard, 2009; J. Hoegaerts: *Voices that Matter? Methods for Historian Attending to the Voices of the Past*, «Historical Reflections», 47, 1 (2021), pp. 113-137.

52. N. Howe, *Introduction*, in N. Howe (ed.), *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, Notre Dame (IN), University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, pp. 1-12: 1.

53. E. Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2013; A. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010; M. Rospocher, *The battle for the piazza. Creative Antagonism between Itinerant Preachers and Street Singers in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, in S. Dall'Aglio – B. Richardson – M. Rospocher (eds.), *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, pp. 212-228.

to these events – in word and image, verbal and written or printed, and in sound⁵⁴.

Historians have also recognized the fundamental role played by inter-media actors such as pedlars⁵⁵ or street performers within the early modern multimedia system, in the formation of an evanescent public sphere and a marketplace of news⁵⁶. In Hamburg, Antwerp, London or Amsterdam, marketplaces were populated by street sellers and news hawkers with cheap prints in their baskets - from pamphlets to broadsides, newspapers and journals. Reading news alone or to others, listening to or commenting on news, were some of the main communicative activities in pre-modern cities⁵⁷. Listening to, witnessing, participating in news flows,

54. On the inaugural theories of (early-modern) media events, A. Nünning, *Making Events – Making Stories – Making Worlds: Ways of Worldmaking from a Narratological Point of View*, in V. Nünning – A. Nünning – B. Neumann, *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 191-214; F. Bösch, *Ereignisse, Performanz und Medien in historischer Perspektive*, in F. Bösch – P. Schmidt (eds.), *Medialisierte Ereignisse: Performanz, Inszenierung und Medien seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a. M., Campus Verlag, 2010, pp. 42-57; A. Hepp – N. Couldry, *Introduction: Media Events in Globalized Media Cultures*, in N. Couldry – A. Hepp – F. Krotz (eds.), *Media Events in a Global Age*, London, Routledge, 2009, pp. 1-20. An example of the growing research work addressing this concept of «media events» in the early modern period is T. Weißbrich, *Höchstädt 1704: Eine Schlacht als Medienereignis: Kriegsberichterstattung und Gelegenheitsdichtung im Spanischen Erbfolgekrieg*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2015.

55. Recent studies on pedlars and their book business are J. Salman, *Pedlars and the Popular Press: Itinerant Distribution Networks in England and the Netherland (1600-1850)*, Leiden, Brill, 2014; J. Salman – R. Harms – J. Raymond (eds.), *Not Dead Thing: The Dissemination of Popular Print in England and Wales, Italy, and Low Countries*, Leiden, Brill, 2013.

56. R. Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge (MA), Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010; R. Salzberg – M. Rospocher, *Street Singers in Italian Renaissance Urban Culture and Communication*, «Cultural and Social History», 9 (2012), pp. 9-26; T. Debbagi Baranova, *A coups de libelles: Une culture politique au temps des guerres de religion (1562-1598)*, Geneva, Droz, 2012; L. Degl'Innocenti – M. Rospocher (eds.), *Street Singers in Renaissance Europe*, «Renaissance Studies» (Special Issue), 33, 1 (2019).

57. For example, with estimations for Hamburg, where the reading public amounted to between one-fifth and one-quarter of the population (circa 15-20,000 people) see: D. Bellingradt, *Flugpublizistik und Öffentlichkeit um 1700: Dynamiken*,

whether one was literate or illiterate, was part of the everyday experience in early modern urban spaces. Media and cultural historians have illuminated ballad singers' capacity to act as oral proto-journalists by providing not only entertainment but also information and breaking news to large and heterogeneous urban audiences⁵⁸. The circulation of political information through the performances of street singers, the ephemeral prints they sold, the *media-echoes* they spawned and the urban environment they inhabited, encapsulate the intermediality of early modern communication.

Material evidence of these intermedia practices is offered, for example, by the correspondence between the Venetian merchant Matteo Merlini and his brother, who was at that time stationed between Beirut and Aleppo in Syria. In August 1510, Matteo's intention was to inform his brother of the latest «news discussed on the piazzas» and, mixing oral rumors and official information, the merchant closed his account by attaching to a handwritten letter a cheap two-leaf print describing the recent

Akteure und Strukturen im urbanen Raum des Alten Reiches, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2011, p. 247; and H. Böning, *Der 'gemeine Mann' als Zeitungs- und Medienkonsument im Barockzeitalter*, in A. Johannes – E.-B. Körber (eds.), *Das Mediensystem im Alten Reich der Frühen Neuzeit (1600-1750)*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010, pp. 227-238; Id., *Eine Stadt lernt das Zeitungslesen: Leser, Auflage und Reichweite der Hamburger und Altonaer Zeitungen im ersten Jahrhundert des Zeitungswesens*, in J.A. Steiger – S. Richter (eds.), *Hamburg: Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2012, pp. 391-415.

58. O. Cox Jensen, *The Ballad-Singer in Georgian and Victorian London*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021; J. Hyde, *Singing the News: Ballads in Mid-Tudor England*, London, Routledge, 2018; U. McIlvenna, *When the News was Sung: Ballads as News Media in Early Modern Europe*, «Media History», 22, 3 (2016), pp. 317-333; A. Iglesias Castellano, *Los ciegos: profesionales de la información: Invención, edición y difusión de la literatura de cordel (siglos XVI-XVII)*, in G. Ciappelli – V. Nider (eds.), *La invención de las noticias: Las relaciones de sucesos entre la literatura y la información (siglos XVI-XVII)*, Trento, Università degli studi di Trento, 2017, pp. 467-489; J. Raymond – N. Moxham, *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, Brill, 2016; A. Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014; M. Rospoche, *Songs of War: Historical and Literary Narratives of the 'Horrendous Italian Wars' (1494-1559)*, in M. Mondini – M. Rospoche (eds.), *Narrating War: Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2013, pp. 79-97.

Venetian military reverses. In his missive, Merlini explained how the attached printed ballad had been sold and performed in Ferrara's main square by a street singer, in front of a large audience⁵⁹. Moving across time and space, it is likely that the handwritten newsletter and the printed object might have generated political oral discussions on the other side of the Mediterranean among the international community of European merchants. This collage of different media created in order to circulate information was not unique to the Mediterranean marketplace of news, but operated on a smaller scale even within the microcosm of St Gallen, as described by Carla Roth in her contribution to this volume.

Concluding remarks: the importance of intermediality as a concept

This special issue argues for the importance of intermediality as a concept for early modern media and communication history. The introduction examines the long (and sometimes ambiguous) history of the relationships between written and spoken words, pictures, sound, music and performance, suggesting the need to move away from discussions of the relative influence of one medium at the expense of another and instead to consider patterns of interaction, interplay, interactivity and complementarity between them. In combination with the accompanying chapters, the introduction aims to contribute to recent theoretical efforts to define the concept of intermediality and to approach early modern intermediality in a systemic way. The benefits of such an approach to early modern communication are highlighted through the examples of selected intermedia objects (ranging from printed broadsheet to wooden crucifixes) and communicative practices (from street singing to news selling) in all the articles in this collection. We believe there is a need of more empirical and interdisciplinary research to illuminate the intermediality of the early modern "media ensemble".

59. For this episode, see M. Rospocher, *La miscellanea del cardinale. La battaglia della Polesella tra manoscritto, stampa e oralità*, in Ciappelli – Nider (eds.), *La invención de las noticias*, pp. 31-50.