



Dr Edward Wilson-Lee is a Fellow in English at Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge, and an Affiliated Lecturer in the Department of English.

Dr Edward Wilson-Lee works widely in the field of book history. He has published on, among other things, broadside ballads, translations of *The Aeneid*, and Tudor printings of chivalric romances. He is currently focussing on projects about reading early modern bestsellers and on the part played by translation in the pan-European book market during the first century and a half of print.

Using Early European Books

Dr Wilson-Lee says 'the emergence of *Early English Books Online* a decade ago utterly revolutionised the research in this field and the way in which scholars worked on early modern texts'.

'Not only did it break down the walls between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of early print collections, it also led to an exponential increase in the number of texts with which all scholars can engage in the course of their research. This has led in turn to a broadening of evidence bases and a greater ability to cross-check arguments, as well as the previously unimaginable ability to pinpoint details across hundreds of thousands of texts in a matter of minutes'.

Commenting on books that have informed his translation research, Dr Wilson-Lee added, '*Early European Books* has been particularly useful in

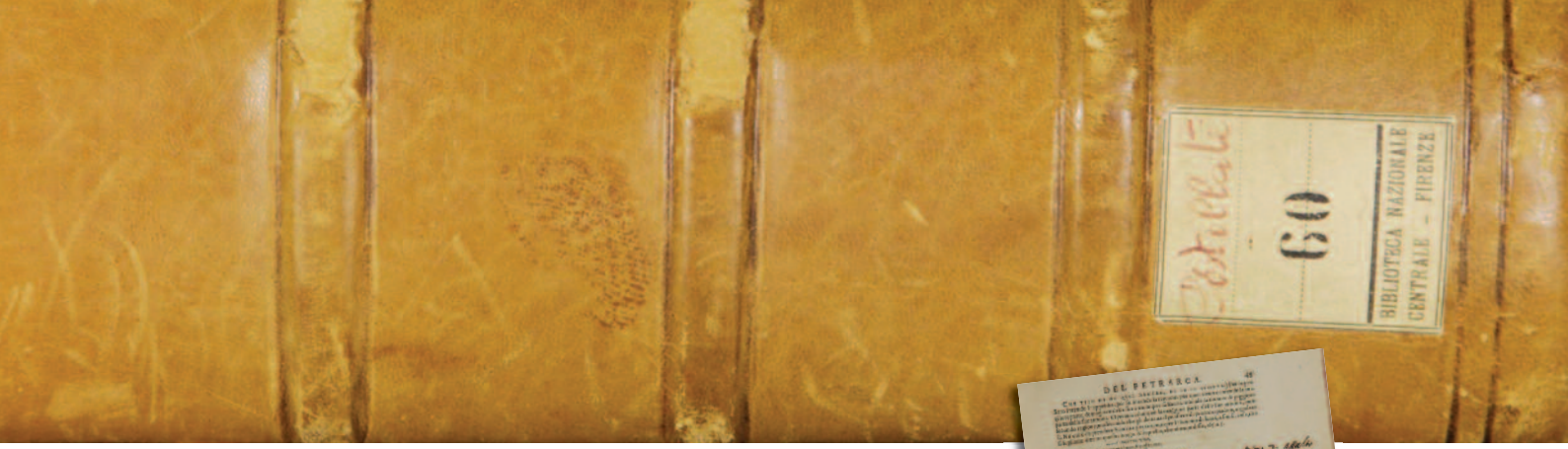
"Something barely short of breathtaking"

"The scanned colour images in Early European Books mean it can be better than looking at real books"

my work on the circulation of texts and ideas between northern Italy, Basel, and London, allowing me to pull up the works of Ludovico Castelvetro printed in Basel alongside the texts on which his nephew, Giacomo, worked in London. It even enabled me to use Galileo's heavily annotated copy of Castelvetro's edition of Petrarch as an example of how Castelvetro's work was used – a real constellation of talent!'

Dr Wilson-Lee believes, 'With its trans-national scope *Early European Books* is also set to effectively break down the artificial barriers between early modern textual cultures first erected in the name of nineteenth century nationalism.

The very best practice in rare books digitisation is being applied. 'By using modern scanning techniques rather than simply digitising microfilms (as *Early English Books Online* had done), *Early European Books* is also a resource sensitive to the evolving demands of scholarship. I have recently worked on rather crabbled and scratchy manuscript marginalia in an early modern text which I suspect was rather easier to read by zooming in on a clear digital image than it would have been if consulting the original'.



On the value of having complete books scanned Dr Wilson-Lee points out that 'being able to see every aspect of the book gives scholars the confidence to work with a digitised text'.

Early European Books is set to further revolutionise the research field. Dr Wilson-Lee comments that, 'As the resource proceeds to

integrate new textual corpuses and to make more texts searchable, it will doubtless have an enormous and exciting impact on all fields of historical and textual research'.

He also then adds, 'I am able to do this research on my own schedule – often on my couch at home with a cup of tea – something barely short of breathtaking'.



About Early European Books

Early European Books traces the history of printing in Europe from its origins to the close of the 17th century. International in scope and incorporating many translated works, it is the ideal complement to *Early English Books Online*.

Scholars are increasingly incorporating *Early European Books* into their work-flow. It is a powerful online platform which allows users to search for, and explore, thousands of rare and influential printed works using the latest in imaging and discovery technology.

Early European Books currently contains works from major national libraries of Europe, including the National Central Library of Florence, the National Library of the Netherlands, The Wellcome Library in London and the Danish Royal Library, with more to follow. These works encompass all major European languages and regions and include essential primary sources for the study of history, religion, science, literature, philosophy, art and music from the period. Influential editions from classical and medieval authors are included as well as extremely rare examples of the art of early printing. *Early European Books* is a unique resource that brings the prestigious collections of renowned European libraries to your desktop.

Every facet of each book is captured in its entirety complete with its bindings, edges, endpapers, blank pages and any loose inserts via glorious high-resolution scanned colour images. By allowing such detailed study of printed works, scholars can rely on a wealth of information about the physical characteristics and provenance histories of original artefacts at the click of a button.

Through rich, clear digital reproductions of the printed works of thinkers and writers in all the major fields of human endeavour, scholars and researchers can gain an international overview of the origins and development of western culture and thought.

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