

Displaced Identities: Exile in Early Modern Europe 1550-1715

20-22 September 2006, King's Manor, York

The conference, the first of its kind, was held in the King's Manor, York, on 20-22 September 2006. It was opened by Professor David Wootton, speaking as the co-director of the University of York's Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies.

The aims of the conference were to examine the nature and of displacement and exile in early modern Europe. Out intention was to be inter-disciplinary and to be truly European in perspective, with a balance of papers covering more than Britain alone, from the disciplines of history, the history of art, literature and theology. Over the two days, there were a total of sixteen papers, divided into thematic sections, given by research-active experts from around Europe and the United States. The high quality of the presentations and the stimulating, intellectual exchange during the discussions afterwards, exploring core issues such as "exile, authority and community", "exile and gender", "exile and jurisdiction" etc., made the conference a great success.

Paul Arblaster (KU Leuven, Belgium) opened the conference with an excellent survey paper on the question of exile in Early Modern Europe. His paper was highly inter-disciplinary in that it skilfully wove together evidence from literary and archival sources. Nadine Akkerman (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) gave a thoroughly researched and beautifully presented paper on Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, and her strategies of empowerment during her 40 year exile in The Hague. The issues of sovereignty and gender in exile raised by Nadine's paper tailored well with that of the Diederick Lanoye (KU Leuven, Belgium), who discussed the identity formation of Christina of Sweden in exile. Edward Corp (University of Toulouse) delivered a spirited paper on questions of the royal and cultural identity of James III during his double displacement first in St. Germain and then the Papal States. The last session of this first day was dedicated to "Soldiers and Exile". Here, Martyn Bennet (Nottingham Trent University) gave an intriguing paper on British men in military service abroad during the first half of the seventeenth century and their contribution to military and political developments in Britain after their return from the continent. Martyn's paper was an excellent introduction to that of Steve Murdoch (University of St. Andrews, who replaced Guy Rowlands at short notice) on the large scale forced and unforced military migration ensued by the military strategies of King James VI and I.

The first two sessions of the second day on "Thought and Expression" and "Representations" brought the views of literary and art historians into the discussion

thus furthering the inter-disciplinary exchange of the conference. The first session was opened by a very well received paper from Thomas O'Connor on Irish Jansenists and Irish identities in seventeenth-century Europe. Hugo Tucker complemented the discussion with a thought-provoking paper on questions of "Exile, Displacement and Writing in Renaissance Europe". Nils Büttner (University of Dortmund) significantly enriched our view of exile in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Low Countries with a paper on the famous landscape painter Gillis van Coninxloo and his forced departure from Antwerp and subsequent exile in Amsterdam. Nils investigated the possibility of a link between the exiled status of the artist and the appearance of his paintings and made highly interesting suggestions on the economic and financial motives of Coninxloo's exiled patrons. Elizabeth Evenden (Newnham College, Cambridge) equally heightened the audience's awareness of the significance of visual representations by looking at the impact of exiles on the printing industry in early modern England. The last two sessions of the conference were dedicated to issues of religious exile. Here, theologians Abbott Geoffrey Scott (Douai Abbey, Berkshire) gave an inspiring paper on the political, theological and cultural influences on English, Catholic exiled communities in continental Europe and the related question whether they gradually transformed themselves into European Catholics. The last speaker supported by the British Academy was Andrew Spicer (Oxford Brookes University), who complemented Geoffrey Scott's paper with an excellent investigation of Protestant Exiles in England. David Loades, whose presence at the conference was also supported by the British Academy, was an energetic and intelligent contributor to debates throughout the conference and acted as chair for this last session.

The CREMS support secured the participation of renowned scholars in the field.

We hope that the conference will provide opportunities for further research collaborations with colleagues in Britain and Europe, and intend to publish the conference proceedings.