

EPHEMERA

H E L V E T I C A

ASSOCIATION SUISSE POUR L'ÉTUDE DES IMPRIMÉS ÉPHÉMÈRES
SWISS ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF CHAPBOOKS AND OTHER CHEAP PRINTS
ASSOCIAZIONE SVIZZERA PER LO STUDIO DEI FOGLI VOLANTI
SCHWEIZERISCHE VEREINIGUNG FÜR DAS STUDIUM EPHEMERER DRUCKERZEUGNISSE

Since the beginning of the printing press, ephemera encompass a group of texts whose intrinsic fragility and use have all but lead to their disappearance. They consist of modest works, mass-produced and sold at low prices, destined to a broad public that included uneducated, even illiterate persons. Within their pages, one could find ballads, abridged versions of novels or popular plays, accounts of real or fictional events of national or local importance giving prominence to bandits and murderers, poems, songs and comedies, calendars, flyers, posters, or even pious texts. These documents constitute an essential counterpart to the study of history and canonical literary works. They provide clarifications on a number of domains, particularly popular culture, the history of the book, the circulation of ideas and images, processes of re-writing, and the importance of oral transmission.

Though texts and accounts published in the form of ephemera survive to this day in many places around the world, they constitute an important part of Europe's bygone past. The disappearance of such a traditional editorial activity, along with the loss of the printed objects themselves, compels us to study these publications and preserve what is becoming a fading memory. Geneva – a city which holds an important place in European print history – is also the place of the conservation of various collections of French and English booklets, of Spanish *pliegos de cordel*, and Brazilian prints. It is in this city that EPHEMERA HELVETICA, the Swiss Association for the Study of Chapbooks and other cheap prints, has decided to establish its headquarters.

The aim of the EPHEMERA HELVETICA Association is to promote the study of these prints (including newspapers, leaflets, flyers, posters with text, prints, etc.) among researchers established in Switzerland, irrespective of their language, nationality, or area of study. From linguistics through musicology, to history, sociology, and ethnology: regardless of the area being studied, EPHEMERA HELVETICA wishes, above all, to create a network of relations and communication by bringing together those who study or are interested in these documents — first of all in Switzerland, but also globally. Furthermore, the Association will work to raise awareness among institutions, libraries, museums, archives, and private collections containing ephemera of the interest of these documents and the necessity to preserve, catalogue, and digitalise them.

In the interest of promoting research, the members of the EPHEMERA HELVETICA Association will organise an annual scientific meeting on the occasion of the General Assembly (the next General Assembly will take place in Geneva in December 2021). In addition, the members' publications will be communicated via a bibliographical bulletin, which will itself be shared in the same year as the triennial international congress. The proceedings of the latter will subsequently also be published.

The first international congress, "The Long Life of Ephemera" will take place from the 5th to 7th of May 2022 in Geneva (programme already established). The opening lecture will be given by Professor Emeritus Jean-François Botrel (Université de Rennes-II).

You are cordially invited to join the EPHEMERA HELVETICA Association (see attached registration form). The cost of membership, which is essential to the operation of the Association, amounts to 25 CHF per year.

EPHEMERA HELVETICA Board for 2020-2023:

- Constance Carta (Université de Genève), Chair
- Thalia Brero (Université de Genève), Deputy Chair
- Elina Leblanc (Université de Genève), secretary
- Gabriele Bucchi (Université de Lausanne), treasurer

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