ABSTRACT: English “Heyday” Broadside Ballads

My talk today seeks to recapture, if only by approximation, England’s popular and once vibrant, if always shifting, lived “heyday” broadside ballad experience. To that goal, I focus on the mobile and protean English ballads printed in the late 16th through 17th centuries. These were marked by an expansion of the size of the ballad sheet and an intensification of its multimedia: its decorative black-letter (or Gothic) typeface, its eye-catching woodcuts and other ornaments, and its toe-tapping tune title(s). Additionally, I seek to adventure my study one step further: to gesture towards an analogy that can affirmatively cross the vast expanses of early modern space and time to inhabit not only England’s but also Czechia’s mass-marketed experiences of their respective peaks of multimedia broadside ballads as *alike*. With a sympathetic analogy to each land’s heyday of broadside ballads, we might just recognize—without flagrantly affirming sameness—that scholars can build a bridge that allows them and the general public to cross even wide cultural divides and momentarily inhabit the past.

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