



DisComPoSE - Disasters, Communication and Politics in Southwestern Europe

Report of Brendan Dooley's seminar "La storia della stampa e della lettura in età moderna: orientamenti e studi recenti" (The history of printing and reading in the modern age: recent trends and studies)

January 18th 2019, at 3.00 p.m.

Department of Human Studies - Via Porta di Massa 1 – Naples

On January 18th 2019, in the framework of the ERC-funded project *Discompose*, the seminar that saw the participation of **Brendan Dooley** (University of Cork) as speaker took place on the topic *La storia della stampa e della lettura in età moderna: orientamenti e studi recenti*, (The history of printing and reading in the modern age: recent trends and studies) developing questions related to the history of production and the diffusion of the press in the early modern age, as well as the use of digital humanities in the history of books and in the history of information and knowledge.

In particular Brendan Dooley has highlighted the issues and problems about the production, circulation and use of an edition of the book of the Italian writer Gianfrancesco Straparola da Caravaggio with the title *Le piacevoli notti* (first edition in 1550), a collection of a novellas, belonging to a Florentine woman in the late Renaissance, Angelica Baldacchini, which had become the main subject of investigation for the Dooley. The discovery of Angelica's signature in the middle of Straparola's book ("this book belongs to Angelica Baldachini" – in original "questo libro appartiene ad Angelica Baldacchini" – folio 144v) constitutes in fact for Dooley the beginning of his research: who is Angelica Baldacchini? Why does she decide to manifest his identity through a handwritten possession note in a dangerous book and therefore subjected to censure? Moreover, questions related to the cultural and social history of the European Renaissance, such as the access of the women to culture and reading. These are the main questions of Dooley that places at the



base of his research and he tries to answer in one of his most recent research entitled “Angelica’s Book and the World of Reading in Late Renaissance Italy” (2016).

However, there are numerous doubts concerning the edition examined and therefore numerous are the conjectures made by Dooley: it is difficult to indicate the genesis of the book, because of the poor state of preservation, but also the

identity of Angelica, as well as identifying with certainty his belonging family. However, the signature put by the florentine woman reveals some characteristics about the diffusion and use of forbidden reading in the female universe during the Renaissance, able to read and write, but also to boast the property of a book considered dangerous in the culture of the sixteenth century.