

<b>Institution: University of Nottingham</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 28</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Renaissance effect: the role of marvel in the birth and rebirth of Lorraine
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Bamforth's research on the Renaissance scientific marvel contributed to a major French exhibition <i>The Birth of Modern Lorraine</i> (Musée Lorrain, Nancy, 4 May–4 August 2013). The exhibition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided 24,295 visitors (from Nancy, Lorraine, rest of France, the EU and rest of world) with increased knowledge of the rich cultural heritage and worldview of Renaissance Lorraine</li> <li>• increased the flow of visitors (11,467 first-time visitors) to the museum itself</li> <li>• raised the museum's profile through the French Ministry of Culture's formal designation of the exhibition as a 'cultural event of national importance'</li> <li>• attracted 5,000,000€ of public and private funding for this and its sister exhibitions in Nancy</li> <li>• enhanced public perceptions of the image of the museum</li> <li>• acted as a flagship for the museum's ambitious programme of expansion and renovation</li> <li>• enhanced public perceptions (locally, nationally and internationally) of the historical and cultural importance of both town and region</li> <li>• renewed civic pride and regional optimism following a period of industrial decline</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research underpinning the impact was carried out between 1996 and 2013 by Stephen Bamforth, successively Senior Lecturer, Reader (1997) and Professor (2001) of Renaissance Studies at the University of Nottingham. His work on 16th-century medical history and scientific poetry led to research on the scientific marvel in Early Modern Europe, investigating the relation between wonder and science and exploring the continued centrality of marvel (the bizarre, the monstrous, the inexplicable) as a driver of enquiry throughout the so-called 'scientific revolution' of the Renaissance.</p> <p>In 1996, at the Wellcome Institute, Bamforth discovered the lost illuminated manuscript of Pierre Boaistuau's <i>Histoires prodigieuses</i>, presented to Elizabeth I in 1560. In its printed form, this compilation was a Renaissance best-seller, re-published 24 times, greatly expanded in successive editions, and translated into English, Dutch and Spanish. It is the single most important Renaissance work on monsters, prodigies and monstrous births. Bamforth's discovery, an academic event that attracted public interest and media coverage, led to a luxury Italian edition, simultaneously published in French/English, French/Spanish and French/Italian, edited and annotated by Bamforth with facsimile reproduction of the illuminations [3.1]. This was followed by the preparation, in collaboration with Jean Céard, of the first-ever critical edition of the printed version of Boaistuau's text, which followed shortly after the manuscript [3.2]. A significant feature of the edition, which reproduced the original woodcuts, was Bamforth's detailed contextualisation and interpretation of the illustrations, and his exploitation of the illuminated manuscript to establish their genesis. This focus on the centrality of the visual dimension of the marvellous, of which the Lorraine region offers particularly rich and striking examples, is an integral thread of his ongoing research on the scientific wonder in Early Modern Europe [3.3].</p> <p><b>The relevant findings of Bamforth's research are as follows:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Marvel is intrinsic to the process of enquiry in the 16th century</li> <li>2.2 The exceptional and the anomalous are categories of everyday experience</li> <li>2.3 The marvellous is a shared theme in terms of learned culture and popular culture alike</li> <li>2.4 Marvel is both object and emotional response, so that the concept of the marvellous revolves around the question of transmission and reception</li> <li>2.5 The experience of marvel is primarily a visual experience and book illustration, as well as that of popular pamphlets, has a crucial role in its propagation</li> <li>2.6 The notion of the marvel and the prodigy is often place specific and rooted in local tradition, oral, written and visual</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>3.1 Pierre Boaistuau, <i>Histoires prodigieuses</i> Ms. 136 Wellcome Library, edited by Stephen Bamforth (Franco Maria Ricci: Milan, 2000), French and English editions published in parallel, with</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

further editions in Italian and Spanish, 54 full colour facsimile illustrations, 251 + 4 unnumbered folio pp. [available on request, submitted to RAE 2001]

3.2 Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses* (édition de 1561), édition critique par Stephen Bamforth, annotée par Jean Céard (Geneva, Droz, 2010), 968 pp. [listed in REF 2]

3.3 Stephen Bamforth, 'On Gesner, Marvels and Unicorns' in *Nouveaux départs: Studies in Honour of Michel Jeanneret*, edited by Stephen Bamforth, *Nottingham French Studies* 49:3 (2010), pp. 110–45. [listed in REF 2]

### The following indicate the quality of the research:

#### External funding:

- British Academy Small Grants in the Humanities 1996: £3,695 (Wellcome ms. 136) [3.1]
- AHRB Research Leave Award 1999: £14,384 (*Histoires prodigieuses* edition) [3.2]
- Marc Fitch Fund 2000: £1,000 (illustrations subvention, *Histoires prodigieuses* edition) [3.2]
- Scouloudi Foundation 2000: £500 (illustrations subvention, *Histoires prodigieuses* edition) [3.2]
- MHRA 2000: £500 (illustrations subvention, *Histoires prodigieuses* edition) [3.2]
- BA Small Grants in the Humanities 2010-12: £7,480 (The Early Modern Scientific Marvel) [3.3]

#### Extracts from English-language reviews of the critical edition of *Histoires prodigieuses* [3.2]:

- 'Both the illustrations and the text are subject to a meticulous and detailed analysis. [...] This is a very impressive edition of a popular Renaissance work that deserved to be reprinted.' *Archives of Natural History* (2012), 186–7.
- 'This critical edition of one of the most influential and popular works of natural history from the 16th century [...] will be of tremendous value to scholars interested in natural marvels and early modern collections, those pursuing the relationship between visual culture and the production of knowledge in this period, and historians of the book.' *Isis* 103: 3 (2012), 572–3.

## 4. Details of the impact

### 4.1 The pathway to impact

4.1.1 Bamforth's research on the manuscript and printed editions of Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses* [3.1; 3.2], and his status as a scholar of marvels in 16th-century Europe [3.3], led to an invitation to collaborate in a major French exhibition, *A New World—The Birth of Modern Lorraine*, which took place 4 May–4 August 2013 at the Musée Lorrain, Nancy [5.1]. The exhibition was part of 'Renaissance Nancy 2013', a programme of activities designed to celebrate and recreate the 'Renaissance effect': to bring alive the rich past of Lorraine, to promote pride in its Renaissance heritage and, by building on Renaissance themes of curiosity, wonder and discovery, to inspire the inhabitants of Lorraine to look at their region, which has lost its industrial base, in new, positive ways. Having 'greatly admired' Bamforth's edition of Boaistuau [3.2], the curator asked him to contribute his research findings to further the exhibition's aim of shedding new light on a curiosity rooted in traditions and superstitions local to Lorraine [2.6]. The 16th-century experience of marvel was recreated for the visitor through visual impact [2.5], through the juxtaposition of bizarre everyday objects with wondrous objects from the world of scientific enquiry [2.3], and through the prominence of books and book illustration [2.5].

4.1.2 Bamforth, one of just two UK members of a large team of curators and scholars, wrote a 5,000-word illustrated essay (one of a total of 14) for the 400-page exhibition catalogue *Un nouveau monde. Naissance de la Lorraine moderne* (Musée Lorrain/Éditions Somogy, 2013) [5.3]. Bamforth's essay, 'Marvels and the marvellous in the sixteenth century' (pp. 156–67) articulates in an accessible manner not just how central the concept of marvel is to the process of inquiry in the Renaissance [2.1], but how marvel is woven visually into the experience of the everyday [2.2; 2.5]. He also curated seven exhibits for a room devoted to 'Prodigies, presages and signs: the supernatural' (cats. 110–16, printed catalogue pp. 280–83 [5.3]). They were chosen to exemplify the centrality of marvel as a feature of the cultural landscape of 16th-century Lorraine, both as object (in terms of cultural heritage) and wondrous response (a way of experiencing and interrogating the immediate world) [2.4]. The predominance of a place-specific marvellous [2.6] was shown by two statues and an everyday, ironwork object relating to the local legend of the

dragon Graouilly, native of Metz. The omnipresence of the marvellous in everyday life [2.2] was illustrated by the ironwork support of a cooking brazier in the form of a flame-dwelling chimera. Finally, the way marvel is intrinsic to learned as well as popular enquiry [2.3], and the crucial role of book illustration in its propagation [2.5], were demonstrated by a tome on giants (considered an extinct earlier form of humanity), an illustrated plate representing the 'Monstrous Pig of Metz', born in Lorraine [2.6] with 8 legs, 4 ears and a dog's head (from a treatise on monstrous births by anatomist and surgeon Ambroise Paré), and a copy of a 1576 edition of Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses*, the illustrated compilation of natural wonders and monstrosities at the centre of Bamforth's research [3.1; 3.2].

4.1.3 On receipt of the catalogue essay, the curator wrote: 'Thank you once more for your very fine text on the supernatural, prodigies and the marvellous, which is sure to become an essential point of reference. It throws very suggestive light on various sections of the exhibition and I am grateful for the detailed cross-references you have included.' Of the 'Pig of Metz', he stressed that 'visitors from the region will be expecting local examples that they can recognise and place', and that 'the exhibition's funders, and especially the municipality of Nancy, are very keen on this aspect of the exhibition'. (email 6.12.12 [5.2])

#### 4.2 Throwing light on Lorraine at the start of modern times – the visitor experience

- A total of 24,295 visitors attended the exhibition from Nancy, Greater Nancy and the Lorraine (60%), but also from other parts of France (21%), the EU (7%) and the rest of the world (12%) [5.4]
- Visitors included 2,672 children on organised school visits, 3,158 children of school age on independent visits and 3,449 school teachers [5.4]
- For 93.5% of visitors, the exhibition 'lived up to' or 'more than lived up to' their expectations, with high scores for the content of the exhibition (91% satisfied or very satisfied) as well as the spatial layout and presentation of the exhibits (87.4% satisfied or very satisfied) [5.4]
- 77.3% of visitors said their knowledge of the Renaissance and Nancy's history had increased [5.4]
- Contributors to the visitors' book described the exhibition as 'very fine', 'magnificent', 'very interesting', 'fascinating', 'well conceived', 'very informative'. Longer comments include: 'I liked everything and learned new things' (10-year old); 'Very good exhibition with beautiful objects and books'; 'Congratulations to the curators of this outstanding exhibition which throws light on Lorraine at the start of modern times'; 'I learned many things'; 'A very well designed, high-quality exhibition. What a shame it doesn't go on all summer'; 'This is my second visit. The exhibition really is exceptional'. [5.5]

#### 4.3 Capturing the singularity and vitality of Lorraine's heritage – the catalogue reader

The catalogue was on sale at the museum and available through bookshops and Amazon. A blog review of 3.6.13 indicates the reach of the research beyond those who actually visited the exhibition: 'Some books make you want to discover the historical and artistic heritage of a region. This is the effect of *A New World: The Birth of Modern Lorraine*, a collaborative publication of the very highest quality that explores the mysterious Renaissance Lorraine in an original, modern manner. [...] Richly illustrated, it offers an unusual account of the attitudes of the population of Lorraine in the period, avoiding the trap of boring the reader with long lists of artists and historical events. Above all, it appears motivated by the desire to capture the singularity—and vitality—of Nancy and the Lorraine, offering an original perspective on the sociology, psychology and politics of these people through their everyday lives. This informative volume familiarises us in an appealing way with the complex heritage of Lorraine.' [5.6]

#### 4.4 Promoting the museum – flagship of an ambitious programme of expansion

A **new and wider audience was attracted to the museum**, including 11,467 first-time visitors [5.4]. Visitors were encouraged to explore other parts of the museum, which is housed in the culturally and historically significant palace of the Dukes of Lorraine and contains important collections concerning the heritage of Lorraine. The **national and international prestige of the museum was enhanced** by the award to the exhibition of the prestigious accolade 'cultural event of national importance' by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. It is described on the

Ministry website as an 'exhibition of international significance' and of 'outstanding importance for its intellectual quality, its strategic engagement with the media and its remarkable public outreach' [5.7]. **5,000,000€ of public and private funding was awarded** for this and its sister exhibitions (3,500,000€ from the municipalities of Nancy and Greater Nancy, 152,000€ from the national Ministry of Culture and 1,348,000€ from corporate sponsors (source *Le Monde*, 20.5.13 [5.8]). The major corporate sponsor of *The Birth of Modern Lorraine* was the Vinci Group (European investor in infrastructural projects), while its main regional sponsor was Banque populaire Lorraine/Champagne (a banking and insurance group) [5.1]. **Public perceptions of the image of the museum were enhanced** by the exhibition, with 82.45% of visitors reporting a more positive view of the Musée Lorrain and their intention to return. In these ways, the exhibition had a **flagship role prefiguring the museum's ambitious 10-year programme of expansion and renovation**. A high-profile international architectural competition ran in parallel to the exhibition, with the winning firm announced in Sept 2013 [5.1]. Mounting *The Birth of Modern Lorraine* in a newly renovated gallery of the Palace of the Dukes of Lorraine was the symbolic first stage of a project that is designed, with significant national and municipal funding, to transform the Musée Lorrain into a major regional museum [5.1; 5.3; 5.8].

#### 4.5 A Renaissance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the wider impact on Nancy and the Lorraine region

Public awareness of the exceptionally rich cultural heritage of Nancy and Lorraine was increased, whether by visiting the exhibition, or by exposure to its widespread media coverage (as well as that of 'Renaissance Nancy 2013' as a whole), at local and national level [5.8]. **Public perceptions of the historic and cultural importance of both town and region were enhanced**, with 91% of visitors to *The Birth of Modern Lorraine* reporting a more positive view of Nancy [5.4]. **Civic pride and regional optimism and vitality were renewed**, following industrial decline across the Lorraine, through reconnection, on an individual and collective level, with the Renaissance ethos of curiosity and inventiveness. Two exhibition reviews in the national press stressed this dimension: 'It's the richness of a past that combines darkness and new light that the inhabitants of Nancy and Lorraine are invited to reappropriate and defend' (*Le Monde*, 20.6.13 [5.6]); 'We celebrate the past of a magnificent town and the beauty of its heritage. But we plunge too into the future by reflecting on a new renaissance for a somewhat gloomy 21st century.' (*Le Point*, 2.5.13 [5.6]) Comments in the visitors' book include the following: 'It makes you proud to come from Lorraine!'; 'What a magnificent Renaissance and what a Renaissance for the 21st century!' [5.5]

**4.6 A stimulus to local tourism** was provided by *The Birth of Modern Lorraine*, which attracted regional, national and international visitors to Nancy. The museum's own interim impact study shows that a total of 11,661 exhibition visitors came from outside the local *département* of Meurthe-et-Moselle, of whom 7,045 came from other parts of France, 1700 from the EU, and 2,915 from other parts of the world [5.4]. Tailored packages including exhibition entry and guided tours of Renaissance Nancy were widely marketed by the Tourist Office. Further detailed analysis of the impact of the exhibition on all aspects of tourism is underway, and will include the overall impact of 'Renaissance Nancy 2013' of which the exhibition was a part [5.4]. The final report on this and all economic spin-offs of the exhibition will be published by the Ville de Nancy in Spring 2014.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 [www.renaissancenancy2013.com](http://www.renaissancenancy2013.com) for all publicly available information on the context and aims of the exhibition and the redevelopment of the Musée Lorrain; for promotional press packs and Tourist Office material; for lists of public and corporate sponsors

5.2 Emails from co-organiser and specialist curator of exhibition, for role of Bamforth's contribution [available on request]

5.3 Exhibition catalogue, for content and context of Bamforth's exhibit descriptions and general essay [available on request]

5.4 *Rapport intermédiaire*, an interim impact report commissioned from Planeth Culture (an independent Paris-based cultural consultancy) by the Ville de Nancy [available on request]

5.5 Extracts from exhibition visitors' book [available on request].

5.6 <http://blogdephaco.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/un-nouveau-monde-naissance-de-la.html>

5.7 <http://www.culture.fr/Actualites/Musee-Expos/Expositions-d-interet-national-2013>

5.8 Archive of press reviews and weblinks for media coverage of exhibition [available on request]