

<b>Institution: University of Manchester</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 28 (Modern Languages and Linguistics)</b>
<b>Title of case study: Discovering Grassroots Catholic Culture in Theatre: Searchable catalogue of the <i>fonds Brochet</i> (Bibliothèque Jacques-Lacarrière, Auxerre, France)</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The product of the underpinning research is a dynamically searchable, on-line catalogue of the archives of theatrical producer, critic and cultural promoter Henri Brochet (1898-1952). Preservation and interpretation of historical memory is a major part of the impact, which comes from the discovery of an aspect of grassroots Catholic activity in France. Importantly, the catalogue is physically sited not in one of the metropolitan centres of France but in Auxerre, Brochet's home town (a major centre at the provincial level). Access to these materials has enabled an apparently peripheral (regional) public to understand local, national, and international heritage in ways that enrich civic and cultural life.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The impact is based on research on French Catholic theatre that took place in Manchester between 2001-2005. The first journal article [3.2] laid the ground for the investigation into correspondence between cultural promoters and the book <i>Le Théâtre catholique en France au XXe siècle</i> [3.1], is a full-scale treatment of the questions around the significance of theatre in Catholic French life, leading to impacts on civic and cultural life. The key researcher was Professor Henry Phillips (1995-date) assisted by two research associates, Aude Pichon (2001-3) and Louis-Georges Tin (2004-5).</p> <p>The research aimed to explore the unprecedented collaboration between the French Catholic Church as an institution and a variety of individual Catholics and Catholic organisations. This collaboration came after centuries of religious hostility to, and suspicion of, theatre. The organisations were aspiring to produce forms of public theatre which would be both acceptable to a believing public and would demonstrate the existence of a serious Catholic culture in the perceived context of a dechristianised France. An investigation of this scale had never previously been attempted, or the subject seriously considered in scientific terms.</p> <p>The initial stages of the research involved identifying relevant archival material and other sources, in most cases little known or undiscovered, including correspondence [3.2], some of this held in the <i>fonds Brochet</i>. The research, once completed, resulted in the monograph [3.1] and articles in British, French and Canadian journals (including [3.3] and [3.4]).</p> <p>The research demonstrated the degree to which the French Catholic theatre movement counted not only on the support of major theatrical figures but also on the active collaboration of members of the clergy, including major episcopal figures. A key finding was the existence of a vibrant amateur theatrical culture at the level of diocese and parish throughout France, organised nationally by a legally constituted association with its journal and elected officials. Within this context, the research also highlighted the major contribution over 30 years from 1922-1952 of Henri Brochet, especially his theatrical and personal collaboration with playwright and critic Henri Ghéon, which aspired to produce a performable repertoire for professionals but especially for amateur troupes in cities and in the remotest corners of France.</p> <p>From 1933, Brochet was located in Auxerre where he produced a journal, <i>Jeux, tréteaux et personnages</i>, until his death in 1952. He led a troupe in his Paris years, which he later supported from Auxerre, the 'Compagnons de Jeux'. This amateur troupe toured throughout France, but also in Belgium, the Low Countries and Spain. Brochet and Ghéon were intimately connected with major Canadian and Belgian figures in the Catholic theatre movement, and both corresponded frequently with amateur practitioners throughout France and abroad. Professor Phillips' published work in this area as a whole concentrates on France in particular but also on Ghéon's and Brochet's international undertakings, as well as Brochet's wider network. One major contribution of the research is to offer a picture of Catholic presence and visibility in a Third Republic with a determined laicising agenda.</p>

A British Academy research grant [3.5] to develop this work in a specifically designed catalogue represents the final bridge between the research work of the early-to mid-2000s and the subsequent impact.

### 3. References to the research (AOR - Available on Request)

Book:

3.1. Phillips, Henry. 2007. *Le Théâtre catholique en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Honoré Champion), 903 pp. ISBN-13: 978-2745316417

Honoré Champion is the major French academic publisher in the arts and humanities and has also been selected for open-shelf access in the Département des Arts du spectacle at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in recognition of its significance as a major contribution to the history of theatre in France. (AOR)

Journal articles:

3.2. Phillips, Henry. 2004. 'Jacques Copeau et le théâtre catholique en France: correspondance inédite avec Henri Brochet', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 2: 439-458. ISSN 0035-2411. DOI 10.3917/rhlf.042.0439.

3.3. Phillips, Henry. 2008. 'Le théâtre catholique en Europe et au Canada d'après la correspondance inédite du Fonds Henri Brochet', *Revue de littérature comparée* 326: 175-194. ISBN 9782252036587. (AOR)

3.4. Phillips, Henry. 2009. 'Nos Spectacles 1946-1975: présence et effacement d'une revue catholique', *Modern and Contemporary France* 17: 301-317. 0963-9489 (Print), 1469-9869 (Online). DOI: 10.1080/09639480903037137

The articles are all peer-reviewed.

3.5. Research grant (2007):

Title: 'A Catalogue of the Fonds Henri Brochet, Bibliothèque municipale d'Auxerre (France)'

Funding body: British Academy. Amount: £7500:

[http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/awards/srq06\\_07.cfm](http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/awards/srq06_07.cfm)

(AOR)

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Context

Prior to Professor Phillips' visits to the library (from 2003 for the underpinning research and from 2008 for the cataloguing), no on-site expertise was available for precise identification of the archival material. The archive had been donated to the library in two stages with some prior sorting but without any further rigorous classification. Additionally, without the provision of a sophisticated data-base following the wholesale reorganisation of the archive by Phillips, the archive could not have been made meaningfully available to members of the public. Beyond enabling physical access to the archive's contents, the cultural impact of the catalogue lies in its status as a publicly accessible record, in a provincial municipal library, of an aspect of historical memory often underestimated in France -- the visible presence of vibrant Catholic cultural activity in the whole of the country, down to the remotest villages. In this sense, it gives rise to the interpretation and understanding of cultural capital in linking local activity -- particularly in Auxerre and Burgundy -- to grassroots participation in national and international frameworks [5.1].

#### Pathways to impact

The research mapped connections between individual, grassroots Catholics in France, theatrical activity, and the construction of a sense of Catholic culture. With Brochet at the centre of this, and the presence of the resource of the *fonds*, a key step was the design of a means of opening up public perspectives on the construction of this culture. Two public lectures on the work were given

## Impact case study (REF3b)

in 2004 [5.2] and one in 2009. The conceptual organisation of the underpinning research constituted a major factor in the approach to the material in the preparation of the catalogue and it directed the entire physical reordering of material. Phillips's research and scholarly expertise, and his accrued contacts with the library and the community fed directly into the scoping and detailed design of the catalogue as a portal onto this core aspect of French cultural life. In addition, the research undertaken for publication [3.3] allowed for informed classification of material outside France connected to Brochet.

A major benefit to users of the material is a highly organised and informed level of accessibility. This is enhanced by the nature of the catalogue which is constructed according to a fully searchable data-base with the material connected via a wide variety of links according to person, text, nature of object, date, author, troupe and other rubrics. The catalogue's immediate material impact lies thus in its dynamic form, a great rarity in the world of local, even national, French archives. As few as four key words allow the whole archive (106 boxes of material) to be navigated [5.3 catalogue tab]. No extensive academic knowledge is therefore required. As the Librarian responsible for Departmental Archives attests, one early reader "was delighted to find quickly what he/she was looking for, and [noted] that there were a large number of things ready for further exploitation" [5.4].

### Details and types of impact

The impact on members of the public accessing the catalogue through the library's web site [5.3: link tab], or on-site, falls squarely in the domain of **preserving, conserving and presenting cultural heritage** in a local, national and international context. Readers in the local community are able to discover aspects of their municipal and regional culture through access to the activities and writings of Brochet and those around him, while the scope and significance is enhanced through networked availability and easy visualisation. An important aspect of the catalogue as an act of conservation is the provision of illustrations of maquettes and posters (a complete photographic record of the latter compiled by Phillips obviates the need for physical contact with often very fragile objects).

The archive has been made usable by amateur and professional researchers: in the words of the Head Librarian at Auxerre, the catalogued archive "has become a point of reference for all those interested in this particular domain and several researchers have already consulted the archive *in situ*" as well, more extensively, as on-line [5.1; also 5.2]. However, the importance of the archive lies precisely in its status as a publicly accessible witness to local and national cultural activity of importance to the community. It opens up knowledge of the work and person of Brochet as, in the words of the Deputy Mayor, a local and regional presence of significance to "local heritage" [5.2]; and it has impact on a wider interested audience, accessing the catalogue off-site [5.3] in the context of a clear underpinning contribution from the University of Manchester, with access to Phillips's work highlighted for users [5.5].

The impact relates to **tourism and heritage** in the local and regional economy as well as to cultural memory. Henri Brochet was based in Auxerre from 1933 to his death and his house served as a reminder of the family's artistic heritage -- through exhibitions (also accessed through the catalogue pages) of his painter/sculptor son François and of other Burgundian cultural figures -- until 2013, and thereafter by the commemorative plaque (part of a wider of public memorialisation of this family in the city). Part of the the private collections of François Brochet is in process of being moved to Vézelay (an important focus of tourism, especially for its positioning on the Camino de Santiago) for exhibition and archiving. The Head Librarian at Auxerre [5.1] confirms the significance and attraction of the archive itself, thus contextualised.

The catalogue reflects a distinctive feature of the underpinning research represented in [3.1], by expanding historical imagination and awareness through attention to Catholic theatre culture. An unusual picture emerges of the Third Republic in a provincial public institution belonging to a continuing but at the same time changing cultural landscape, thus heavily nuancing or even challenging the dominant narrative of modern French history and making a powerful contribution to **public education**.

**Impact case study (REF3b)****5. Sources to corroborate the impact.**

All claims are referenced in section 4.

5.1. Letter from the Conservateur en chef (Head Librarian). 10 May 2012. Confirmation of the importance of the catalogue for the Library and confirmation of consultation by users.

5.2. Letter from the Deputy mayor with responsibility for culture, Ville d'Auxerre. 25 August 2012. Confirmation of the impact of the catalogue at the level of municipal and regional cultural heritage and of Phillip's 2004 lectures.

5.3. Project landing page and links to catalogue and Auxerre library's own site: <http://frenchamateurcatholictheatre.llc.manchester.ac.uk/Accueil.aspx>

5.4. Letter from the Librarian with responsibility for departmental archives. 12 May 2012. Confirmation of consultation of the catalogue by local users of the Library.

5.5. Auxerre library's archives page directing users to Phillips's catalogue: <http://www.bm-auxerre.fr/opacwebaloes/index.aspx?IdPage=35>