



Projet ERC Advanced Grant AGRELITA

The Reception of Ancient Greece in Pre-modern French Literature and Illustrations of Manuscripts and Printed Books (1320-1550) : How Invented Memories Shaped the Identity of European Communities

Direction : Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas

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<https://agrelita.hypotheses.org/>

International Conference

Metamorphoses and uses of the same past and formation of identities in Europe from the 14th century to the 1980s : shared, in competition, or antagonistic memories

Thursday, September 14th, and Friday, September 15th, 2023

Organisation : Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas

The ERC research program AGRELITA (The Reception of Ancient Greece in pre-modern French Literature and Illustrations of Manuscripts and Printed Books (1320-1550) : How invented memories shaped the identity of European communities) is a transdisciplinary research program : literature, art history, political, cultural and social history, memory studies, European studies. It focuses on different modes of reception of Greek antiquity in the premodern era (1320-1550) and analyses how the creation of memories of ancient Greece in textual and visual cultures was exploited to support the formation of political and cultural identities at several levels (local, regional, (pre)national, transnational and European ones) in Western Europe from the 1320s to the 1550s.

This September 2023 conference's ambition is to broaden the reflection on these issues of the uses of the same recomposed/reinvented past to form political and cultural identities at several levels, by opening it :

-to other pasts (ancient, medieval, or modern ones)

-to a wider period of reception and exploitation of these pasts, from the 14th Century to the 1980s, and throughout Europe.

In other words, this conference aims to explore how, at the same period or at different periods, the same past is reinterpreted or even reinvented and may be used to form several

political identities : the same past may be instrumentalized to strengthen the identity of a particular political entity, to federate the elements that make it up, to enforce it against other competing political powers, as well as to unite several political entities, to create shared memories, supranational and particularly European ones.

We defined the 14th Century as the starting point, because an increasingly sustained exploitation of the past is emerging during this period in political practices, literature and the arts ; stronger assertions of political and cultural identities appear – whether local, regional, or pre-national –, as well as new expressions of the idea of Europe, particularly in the context of the mobilization against the Ottomans.

We defined the 1980s as the *terminus ad quem*, because new relations to the past (the new ‘regime of historicity’ of ‘presentism’, F. Hartog) and to memory occurred during these years. The 1980s constitute the very beginning of a period marked by the multiplication of readings and exploitations of the past by more diverse people, hence the birth of new forms of memory rivalries and also of sharing of memories. They precede the eastward enlargement of the European construction, a movement of reinterpretation of many national histories, and at the same time the implementation of incentive policies to assert the formation of transnational memories and a European memory. They also consist in the very beginning concerning the phenomena of globalization and the creation of a worldwide memory.

Policies and uses of memory, whether they emanate from political powers, from communities, associations, and increasingly diverse people, have given rise and still give rise to numerous studies about contemporary history : how regional, national and transnational political identities interact.

Exploiting the past and the memory created from it as a political tool has of course existed for centuries, with forms and means that have undergone profound changes ; many studies have also been devoted to the elaboration of memories that reinforce national identities under construction in the Modern era, as well as to expressions of the idea of Europe. The six-volume edition by S. Berger and J. K. Olick, *A Cultural History of Memory* (2020), has recently highlighted the evolution of different forms of memory from antiquity to the present day.

Memory studies, examining how regional, national and transnational identities interact, is a field in which we think that investigations are still to be carried out, especially concerning the precise question that we are associating with it for this conference : metamorphoses and uses of the memory of the same past by different people, considering the long period that goes from the 14th Century to the 1980s.

AGRELITA welcomes proposals from various disciplinary fields (literature, history, art history, archaeology, geography, philosophy, sociology, political science, anthropology, memory studies, European studies) and from various periods across the whole European geographical area. Applying multi-disciplinary approaches and crossed analysis, perspectives and concepts, AGRELITA means to offer new insight into this question.

AGRELITA invites submissions of papers that address any of the following questions :

- Dynamics of elaboration of plural memories of the same past and their links with the formation of several political and cultural identities

We aim to investigate shared, complementary, in competition, or antagonistic instrumentalization of the same past by various people, which aims to assert several political and cultural identities, reveals a wide range of strategies (process of narratives, discourses, images, spectacles, symbols, commemoration, heritage formation, museification...) ; how

they are received, recomposed and reinterpreted, sometimes even imagined ; how diverse they are ; how they reflect different values attributed to the past in memory.

- **In this context, we should also consider the interactions between local, regional, (pre)national, and transnational identities as they assert through convergent or differentiated exploitations of the same past.** In other words, how, confronted with the question of values which are attributed to the past, memory is modified by various people and for various audiences, in order to construct, assert, inflect and renew political and cultural identities, and how metamorphoses and uses of the same past may meet an identity renewal or change.

We will examine both the competing memories of the same past and the rise, during the defined period, of transnational memories and identities, as well as whether they conciliate or not with other memories and identities. These transnational memories are then affirmed as memories shared between two or more political communities (for example, shared memories of a sovereign ; memories of wars : conflicting and then reconciled) and/or as a European memory in connection with the affirmation of the idea of Europe.

- **The historical periods, events, intellectual movements, figures, and places that have given rise to differentiated or convergent appropriations by two or more political and cultural communities :** memorial issues of much debated periods, events, figures, and places ; memorial issues of periods, events, figures, and places that several communities appropriate to forge shared memories and reinforce transnational identities.

We are interested in essays that focus on the plurality of memorial uses of the same past through two or more case studies, to analyze how the recomposed memories of the same past make it possible to invent, reinterpret and reinforce one or more particular identities, and/or to create a transnational and particularly European memory.

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Please submit a short abstract (title and around ten lines of presentation) **before September 15th, 2022** to Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas at the following addresses:

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Travel and accommodation costs will be covered according to the terms of the University of Lille.

Papers will be published. **Papers are due by February 15th, 2024.**

For more information about the ERC AGRELITA Project, please see our academic Blog: <https://agrelita.hypotheses.org/>