

The Invention of Greek Origins (Lille, 15–16 Jun 23)

Espace Baïetto, MESHS, Lille (France)

Deadline: Jun 1, 2022

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The Invention of Greek origins in the textual and visual cultures of pre-modern Europe (1100-1600)

Direction: Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas

In 1176, Chrétien de Troyes expressed the idea of a heritage whose cradle would be Greece, the origin of “chivalry” and “clergy”, in the famous Cligès prologue: “Ce nos ont nostre livre apris / qu’an Grece ot de chevalerie / le premier los et de clergie” (v. 28-30). The purpose of such a discourse is to rely on origins to create a continuity through the use of *translatio imperii et studii*, and thus to legitimize and celebrate contemporary power and knowledge in the light of a Greek past. But Chrétien de Troyes does not give any specific content to these Greek origins. Many authors of pre-modern Europe then set about representing them: they appropriated and/or invented Greek origins, since the latter may refer to inherited and often reinterpreted data or were fantasised.

Indeed, between 1100 and 1600, in humanities and arts, the Greek past was used to create different types of origins. The figure of Hercules illustrates this well : it was exploited throughout much of Western Europe, in images as well as in texts, for various political, national and dynastic, social and cultural purposes. As Claude-Gilbert Dubois points out in the introduction to his major work, *Récits et mythes de fondation dans l’imaginaire culturel occidental* (Bordeaux, 2009), a referential network is woven around the triangle formed by the territory, the character and the community that resorts to a Greek origin. Studies on the *origines gentium*, notably the following ones: Alheydis Plassman, *Origo gentis. Identitäts- und Legitimitätsstiftung in früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen* (Berlin, 2006) and Magali Coumert, *Origines des peuples. Les récits du Haut Moyen Âge occidental (550-850)* (Paris, 2007), focused on the links between the writing of origin stories and the creation of a sense of belonging to a community.

If Greek origins often contribute to a political justification, they may also pursue other purposes, in particular in stories and images of the invention or the establishment of a cultural, artistic, scientific or social fact, of a political, legal or intellectual institution. Some examples may be given: the origin of the liberal arts, of painting, of fables, of universities, of academies... Close links thus exist between origin(s) and heritage, and invite us to question the notion of origin(s) by distinguishing it from the more general notion of heritage, and by studying the meanings it covers for the authors and the artists of pre-modern Europe.

These workshops thus aim to explore the uses, functions and purposes of the discourses on Greek origins and the polysemy of this concept between 1100 and 1600, in European textual, visual and material cultures, hinging on the following questions: how the authors and artists consid-

ered the notion of origin(s)? What both unites and distinguishes it from heritage? Why Greeks ? Which Greece(s) are thought of as origins ? Whose origins are these ? What modalities of representation and what processes of appropriation appear? For what purposes and for what audiences?

In order to identify these issues, submitted papers may deal with one or more of the following themes, which do not exhaust the range of possibilities:

- Identity formations and legitimization of forms of government and of institutions: myths of the origins of peoples, cities, communities, dynasties, political, legal, intellectual and professional bodies,
- Greek origins in artistic, scientific and technical inventions, the origins of Greek languages and etymologies, the Greek origins of literary forms and genres,
- Translatio imperii and translatio studii, their staging and their interactions,
- Visual representations of origins, their sponsors and their recipients: paintings, sculptures, tapestries, decorative arts, illustrations in manuscripts and printed books, ephemeral arts (tournaments, festivals, theatre, processions, royal and imperial entrances...), heraldry,
- The relationships and the oppositions between the process of creation or recreation and archaeological acts, based on material evidence, paper records, inventions, imitations, "fakes".

Please submit a short abstract (title and ten lines of presentation, along with a brief CV) before June 1st, 2022 to Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas at the following address: catherine.bougassas@univ-lille.fr

Travel and accommodation costs will be covered according to the terms of the University of Lille. The papers will be published by Brepols publishers, in the "Research on Antiquity Reception" series: <http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=RRA>

Papers are due by September 30th, 2023.

About the ERC Advanced Grant AGRELITA Project:

It studies 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.

The AGRELITA project ERC n° 101018777 was launched on October 1st 2021. It is a 5-year project (2021-2026) financed on an ERC Advanced Grant 2020 through the European Union's Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020.

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

Reference:

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