Performing theatricality and imaging religious ceremonies (Ghent, 15-17 May 24)

Ghent University, VANDENHOVE – Centre for Architecture and Art, May 15–17, 2024
Registration deadline: May 8, 2024

Steff Nellis

Performing theatricality and imaging religious ceremonies in early modern Western Europe.

2023 marks the 300th anniversary of the publication of the early eighteenth-century book series Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde, a work on all the world's religions known to Europe at that time and originally published in seven volumes between 1723 and 1737 in Amsterdam. Edited by the exiled French Huguenot Jean Frederic Bernard, the original seven volumes of the Cérémonies knew a vast distribution across European readers in the Netherlands, France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire, among other countries. Its popularity was at least partly due to the impressive set of prints included within the books. After all, the engravings were for the most part manufactured by the exiled Parisian artist, Bernard Picart, who was known as one of Europe's most distinguished engravers at that time.

More than ten years after the publication of some pioneering studies on the project – Religionsbilder der frühen Aufklärung (2006), The Book That Changed Europe (2010) and The First Global Vision of Religion (2010) – the intriguing ceremonies and customs of the various religions depicted in the books still capture the imagination. This is not only caused by their ingenuity regarding the comparative method of inquiry into religion in general, as earlier research widely acknowledged, but also because of their importance as an early modern compendium of imaging religious ceremonies. After all, as the title already indicates, the Cérémonies discusses global religious ceremonies and customs. It focusses on performing religion, instead of on religion as such.

In line with Picart and Bernard's project, this conference aims to focus on the ways in which early modern Europeans related to religious ceremonies of all kinds, ranging from customs that were familiar to Western Europe's everyday religious life, to rituals from peoples across the globe that were still rather alien to early modern Europeans. How did early modern Europeans perceive religious rituals practiced in other parts of the world, particularly those in overseas territories? To what extent did early modern knowledge production on religious customs contribute to the development of early anthropology and ethnography in the latter half of the eighteenth century? How did representations of religious rituals either endorse or challenge existing knowledge on various religious practices? In what ways did the early modern period witness a shift toward a more encyclopedic approach to representing the ceremonies and customs of various religions, and how did this reflect broader intellectual trends of the Enlightenment era?

Registration link: https://event.ugent.be/registration/ceremonies

PROGRAM:

Wednesday May 15 2024

9AM Keynote:
Bernard Picart, Nil Volentibus Arduum, and the Concept of Imagineering
(Inger Leemans - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

10.30 AM Panel 1: Imag(in)ing religious 'otherness'

1. Katherine Kelaidis (National Hellenic Museum / Center for Orthodox Christian Studies)
The Familiar Other: Re/Imagining Eastern Christian Religious Ceremony in Richard Chandler's Journey to Mount Athos

2. Alexander McCargar (University of Vienna)
A Fascinating Enemy: Ottoman Depictions in the Work of Lodovica Ottavio Burnacini

3. Matthieu Guy Michel Somon (UC Louvain)
Scenes from the religious life according to Alessandro Magnasco

01.30 PM Panel 2: Switching up perspectives

4. Daniel Purdy (Pennsylvania State University)
The Spectacle of Chinese Idolatry: Dutch Book Illustrations contra Jesuit Accommodation
5. Philipp Stenzig (Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften)
Jean-Baptiste Le Brun des Marettes (1651-1731)

03.30 PM Panel 3: Religious ceremonies in New Spain

6. Luis Javier Cuesta Hernandez (Universidad Iberoamericana)
A Global History of Funeral Ceremonies for Philip IVth of Spain: America and Africa

7. Tomas Macsotay (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)
Between Concealing and Domesticizing: Ceremony and Community in Dominican Spaces of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (Mexico)

Thursday May 16 2024

9 AM Keynote:
The hagiographic spectacle in seventeenth-century France
(Agnès Guiderdoni - Université Catholique de Louvain)

10.30 AM Panel 4: Ceremony, festivity, and cultures of commemoration

8. Maria João Pereira Coutinho (Universidade Nova de Lisboa)
Fiat Ignatio, Fida Ignatio. Visual and performative culture of Ignatius of Loyola's beatification festivals in Brussels and Douai (1610)

9. Marek Walczak (Jagiellonian University)
‘It is a Memorial to Posterity that all these Adornments Have Been Set Up’. Glorification of the Past in the Celebrations Commemorating the Canonisation of St. John Cantius Held in Cracow in 1775

10. Ivo Raband (University of Hamburg)
100 Years of Faith: The Festivities for the Centennial of the Recatholicization of Antwerp (1685)

01.30 PM Panel 5: The dramaturgy of the pilgrimage

11. Barbara Uppenkamp & Anke Naujokat (Muthesisu Kunsthochschule Kiel & RWTH Aachen University)
The heptagonal pilgrimage church in Scherpenheuvel and its three image programs

12. Jaroslaw Pietzrak (Pedagogical University of Kraków)
The Spectacle of Power. Religious Ceremonies and Rituals on the Court of Queen Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska (1699-1714)

03.30 PM Panel 6: Rituality and ceremoniality in late medieval and early modern France

13. Margaret Aziza Pappano (Queen’s University)
The Priest in the Execution Ritual: Performing Pain and Penance in Late Medieval France

14. Joy Palacios (University of Calgary)
The Mass and Entertainments in Seventeenth-Century France’s Courtly Ritual System
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Friday May 17 2024

9 AM Keynote:
Staging Religion(s) in the Early Enlightenment: Bernard Picart's Frontispiece for Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde
(Paola Von Wyss-Giacosa - University of Zurich)

10.30 AM Panel 7: Re-considering Picart and Bernard’s Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses I

15. Steff Nellis (Ghent University)
Aspects of theatricality in Picart and Bernard’s Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses

16. Margaret Mansfield (University of California)
Encore! Encore! Picart’s Repetitions of Religious Excess and Austerity in India

17. Sara Petrella (University of Fribourg)
Embodying Americas: From Western representations to Indigenous material culture

01.30 PM Panel 8: Re-considering Picart and Bernard’s Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses II

18. Rachel Kupferman (Bar Ilan University)
The Twin Sets of The Kehilot Moshe Bible

19. Nicolas Kwiátkowski (UPF)
From the son of Adam and Eve to an all-devouring deity. Ganesha in early modern European culture

20. Pascal Rihouet (Rhode Island School of Design)
The Pope’s Triumph: Plagiarized Prints from Rome to Amsterdam

Reference:
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