

Traces, Reflections, and Signs (Naples, 24–26 Sep 25)

Department of Medicine of the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” and the Banco di Napoli Foundation, Naples, Italy, Sep 24–26, 2025

Deadline: Apr 11, 2025

Cecilia Brunetti

Call for papers - First International Doctoral Conference
"Traces, Reflections, and Signs: Dynamics of Transmission"

The Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, in collaboration with the PhD program in History and Transmission of Cultural Heritage, is organising the First International Doctoral Conference titled ‘Traces, Reflections, and Signs: Dynamics of Transmission’.

The conference is part of the Perspectives and Memories project: a cycle of conferences that can promote discussion on the theme of the transmission of cultural heritage in the humanities, creating a stable space for dialogue that will grow over time.

Human history is intrinsically connected to the concept of transmission. Since the dawn of civilisation, human beings have found themselves - willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously - in the position of transmitting knowledge, ideas, languages, practices, norms, and objects across time and space. These processes have facilitated cultural continuity, innovation, and dialogue between communities, contributing to the flourishing of science, technology, and the arts.

Transmission implies a dynamic relationship between producer and receiver, in which assimilation, reinterpretation, and modification are inevitable steps in the perpetuation of cultures. The construction of cultural heritage is not based on objective or unique criteria but is inherently subjective, continuously influenced by arbitrary modifications, aimed at achieving various purposes: from the celebration of values or events perceived as foundational to one’s past to the building of collective identities, from the recognition of boundaries between the group and outsiders to the redefinition of one’s roots. These processes are conveyed through cultural products, whose boundaries elude precise definition, as their material and immaterial manifestations are multiple and potentially infinite. Questioning the value that such testimonies may have had in the building of memory means delving into the complex mechanisms behind constructing the image that a specific society wants to present of itself, taking into account the context and circumstances in which his construction took place.

Particular attention must also be paid to the mechanisms through which a given memory is processed, negotiated, and transmitted. Possible errors in transmission or interpretation, deliberate distortions of the original meaning of a text, image, event, or place, and reception in a different context from that of its creation can easily alter the initial cultural product. The reception context itself contributes to reshaping the representation of one’s past or that of others, potentially trans-

forming it in light of the present. This ongoing evolution continues to shape contemporary societies and actively molds the collective perception of the past.

The three-day conference will explore the multiple dimensions of the transmission of cultural heritage, analysing the processes related to the production and perpetuation of human communities' expressions in their various forms. Contributions should fall within one of the following panels:

1. **Errors in Transmission:** This panel will invite reflections on the impact of unintentional errors on the reception of cultural products, with a focus on how transmission errors can alter the receiver's perception. Although unintentional, such errors are not without consequences: they can generate new meanings, implications, or interpretations that scholars are called to consider. What impact have these errors had? What do they reveal about the era, context and the individuals involved? How have they contributed, even unexpectedly, to transforming the cultural product? Contributions may also address how critical reconstruction can help restore the original meaning of cultural products.

2. **Arbitrary Alterations and Distortions:** This panel will gather contributions that analyse the use of cultural products in their reception context, examining both rhetorical reuses and more conscious adaptations. The cultural context of reception plays a fundamental role in interpreting and potentially modifying certain characteristics of the cultural product. Some alteration processes may easily distort its original meaning, leading to degenerated uses, such as reinterpreting the past through the lens of new needs. On the other hand, more deliberate interventions may preserve the profound sense of a work while respecting the distance between the production and reception context. Contributions focusing on specific manipulations of cultural products and critical efforts to deconstruct arbitrary frameworks will be prioritised, especially those that aim to restore the product to its original context.

3. **Diasporas, Exiles, and Migrations:** Transmission can also occur due to physical relocation from one place to another. Whether caused by wars, colonisation, political exile, or voluntary migration for economic, familial, or educational reasons, people carry with them not only physical and material belongings but also a cultural heritage comprised of traditions, languages, religions, artistic practices, and technical knowledge. This leads to adaptation to new contexts and blending with the destination culture. However, integration or assimilation is not always the outcome: hybridisation, ghettoisation, and the rejection of the "other" are forms of cultural contact. This panel invites contributions exploring the phenomena of cultural encounters resulting from movements from one place to another, whether they lead to synthesis or rejection and conflict. Special attention will be given to works examining how both departure and arrival contexts reflect on encounters with the "other".

4. **Context, Circulation, and Reception:** A cultural product is always conceived within a specific context of creation and circulation, often driven by a patron or social group's desire to represent themselves and convey a specific image through the cultural product, imbuing it with values perceived as identity-defining. But how does the cultural product position itself with regard to future generations? How does it imagine—or hope for—its reception in different times and places? This panel invites contributions that reflect on the relationship between cultural products and their reference context. Contributions may also explore the product's desire for eternalisation beyond the immediate temporal and spatial boundaries of its production, and assess how its reception aligns

with its original purposes.

Participation Guidelines

In line with the interdisciplinary nature of the PhD program in History and Transmission of Cultural Heritage, all current PhD students in a humanities discipline, and scholars who have earned their PhD within the past three years, are invited to submit their proposals via e-mail to orizzontiememorie@gmail.com no later than April 11, 2025.

Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes and must be delivered in person. Panel presentations involving two or more speakers who approach a topic from multiple interdisciplinary perspectives are welcome, provided they remain within the same time limit. Presentations will be organised into thematic panels and distributed over the three days of study. The publication of the conference proceedings will be considered.

The proposal, written in Italian or English, should be submitted in both .doc and .pdf formats and no longer than 400 words (excluding the title). It should be attached to an email with the subject line "Proposal_SurnameCandidate_CFPVavitelli". The body of the email must include the following information:

- Name, surname, University or, Institution of affiliation;
- Title of the proposal;
- Academic field of the proposal;
- Panel for which the presentation is intended.
- Biographical note (maximum 200 words, in .pdf format)

Presentation duration: maximum 20 minutes, in person.

Submission deadline: no later than April 11, 2025.

Notification of selection: by May 12, 2025.

Submission of full papers: by July 28, 2025.

For further inquiries, please contact the Organising Committee at orizzontiememorie@gmail.com e-mail address.

For the full call:

<https://www.lettereбенiculturali.unicampania.it/dipartimento/avvisi/3883-call-for-papers-per-convegno-dottorale-orizzonti-e-memorie-tracce-riflessi-e-segni-dinamiche-della-trasmissione>

Reference:

CFP: Traces, Reflections, and Signs (Naples, 24-26 Sep 25). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 24, 2025 (accessed Jun 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44017>>.