

Vin temps fut que les honnestes homes ^{de valent} escriuoient volontiers
 la vie ^{de} ceux quilz auoient aime^z: et aucuns ont
 compose^z la leur propre ^{ent} c'estoit au moins quelques

Online Workshop
 Nov. 13-14, 2020

Autobiography Before Autobiography (1400-1700)

Jacob Burckhardt famously placed the birth of autobiography during the Renaissance in the context of the discovery of the individual, and the awakening of the self. Few scholars today would fully embrace this master narrative. Medievalists posit the existence of a sense of individual selfhood much earlier, in the High Middle Ages, while many literary theorists of autobiography employ a narrow definition of autobiography focusing on personal development and reflexive subjectivity. Thus, literary theory effectively excludes from the history of autobiography most of what was written before the eighteenth century. Conversely, more recent cultural historians and historians of private life have sought to recover neglected forms of self-writing that do not fit modern definitions of the literary genre of autobiography: account books, semiliterate diaries, or astrological almanacs. They proposed neologisms such as life-writing, egodocuments, and selftestimonies to avoid the teleological implications of the Burckhardian grand narrative, and to include texts that have been neglected by the traditional literary history of autobiography.

The goal of this workshop is to bring together historians and literary scholars working on a wide range of late-medieval and early-modern self-writing forms that challenge the more common, postromantic ideas about autobiography, such as: family books, books of reason, almanacs, artisan autobiographies, but also prefaces and marginalia. Papers that can address the relation of these types of self-writing to the better-known genres of the vitae, commentarii, memoirs, confessions, essays, poetic autobiographies, etc. are especially welcome.

If you wish to attend the workshop, please send an email with your name and affiliation to the following address: nav2110@columbia.edu.

Program

Nov. 13

Nov. 14

14:00

Nicolae Virastau, Columbia University, Freie Universität

"Introduction. Autobiography and Print Culture in Early Modern France."

14:00

Eva Kormann

"Hauschronik des Elias Holl."

14:40

Rudolf Dekker, University of Amsterdam

"Almanacs in the Netherlands: 16th-19th centuries."

14:40

Katarzyna Williams, Australian National University

"Self-formation and self-writing in the texts of Angelus Silesius."

15:20

Break

15:20

Break

15:50

June-Ann Greeley, Sacred Heart University

"Epistolary Self: Autobiography and (The Paston) Letters."

15:50

Lucio Mare, University of San Francisco

"The Autobiographical Cogito: Was There a Subject Behind the Early Modern Emergence of Life-Writing?"

16:30

Max Cavitch, University of Pennsylvania

"The Jouissance of Self-Indictment: Michael Wigglesworth and his *Diary* (1653-57)."

16:30

Effie Botonaki, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

"Tracing the roots of autobiography in other forms of early modern life-writing."

17:10

Break

17:10

Break

17:40

Eva Johanna Holmberg, University of Helsinki

"Visual Self-Description in Seventeenth-Century British Travel Accounts."

17:40

Gabriela Badea, Columbia University

"Autobiographical non-dits in *Le Mortifiement de Vaine Plaisance*."

18:20

Laurie Atkinson

"Autobiography before autobiography in the poetry of William Dunbar."

18:20

Alessandro Grandolfo, University of Naples

"The 'Diary' of Annibale Caccavello's and its omissions: notes upon mid-Cinquecento sculpture in Naples and its Roman models."