DYPA

Dynamiques patrimon
et cultur

STUDY DAY « TRAVEL OBJECTS AND THE TRAVELS OF OBJECTS MATERIAL CULTURE AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE MIDDLE-AGES TO THE GRAND TOUR »

This one-day conference aims to open up the perspective of research on everyday objects and look at their roles in the context of travel. Studies will deal with material and immaterial objects that examine to what extent objects participate in the economy of travel and the formation of European cultural identities from the Middle Ages to the Grand Tour.

Friday 10th november 2017, from 2:00pm to 6:30pm

Institut du Monde Anglophone,
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Salle 33

The influence of cultural studies has led to a renewed interest in material culture over the past twenty years. In the wake of Richard A. Goldthwaite's seminal study, The Empire of Things: Consumer Demand in Italy (1987) or, among others, Daniel Roche's A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800 (1997), everyday objects have been analyzed as key factors to understand social evolution and economic change. While numerous studies have focused on the world of objects within the household and have shown how consumption sheds light on elite behaviours, this one-day conference aims to open up the perspective by crossing the threshold of the home and venturing on the roads of Europe in order to explore the role of objects in the construction of cultural identity from the Middle-Ages to the dawn of the Grand Tour. We are welcoming proposals dealing with material and immaterial objects that will examine to what extent commodities or rarities participate in the making of travel.

Exploring travel through the lens of objects entails a double approach, whether we take into account the pilgrim/traveller's outward or return journey, the objects they take with them or those they bring back from their peregrinations. Beyond the acquisition of useful objects for travelling (clothes, guidebooks, maps, letters of recommendation etc...), desire, taste and pleasure should also be looked at, thus providing a counterpoint to the notion of journey perceived as both travel and travail. What kind of objects did travellers take with them, which objects did they see and describe in their narratives, what about those they were given and those they chose to bring back, either for personal reasons or as a testimony to the veracity of their journeys? Some objects were expected from the traveller's native community (pilgrims signs, scallop shells, relic fragments...), others were less conventional: a case in point is Thomas Coryate's shoes, which he held as trophies both in his Crudities (1611) and in the church of his native village of Odcombe, Somerset.

While the travellers' disquieting strangeness gradually gave way to their foolishness within the British early modern narrative and theatrical space, toothpicks became one of the most common attributes in the representations of travellers. In the Shakespearian comedy, As You Like It, Jacques gives an organic description of his melancholy which originates in things seen during his travels: "...extracted from many objects and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels" (IV,1,13). The study of rhetorical idiosyncrasies displayed by travellers could also help make a patrimonial inventory of discursive artefacts within the textual space.

Téléchargement :

> Poster of the event [PDF - 837 Ko]
> Program of the event [PDF - 1 Mo]

French version

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Organisation, contacts :

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