



Conference in hybrid mode
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Société des études mongoles et sibériennes



Imaginaries of the Steppe Queens in History, Literature, and the Arts. Crossed Views between East and West Paris, 21-22 March 2024

In presence:

Maison de la Recherche
de l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle
4 rue des Irlandais, 75005 Paris

Online (GoogleMeet):

Ask for the link to benedetta.debonis2@gmail.com

Organisation:

Benedetta De Bonis (Sorbonne Nouvelle/Thalim)

Scientific board:

Isabelle Charleux (GSRL)

Benedetta De Bonis (Sorbonne Nouvelle/Thalim)

Sarga Moussa (CNRS/Thalim)



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ABSTRACT

The East has played a key role in the construction of the identity of the West, as a mirror on which it has projected its own fears and desires. In this universe, the Eurasian steppe has long been perceived as a barbaric world, populated by Amazons. The myth of these warrior queens stigmatises two troubling aspects of femininity: virile strength and insubordination to men, traits awakening the ancient fear of matriarchy.

However, modernity and postmodernity – having experienced an acceleration in the circulation between multiple forms and heritages – have gradually enabled us to move beyond this essentialist vision. In this context, the rediscovery of indigenous sources and new studies by specialists have shed new light on the steppe civilisations, by crossing Eastern and Western points of view. Today, nomadic empires are no longer seen as apocalyptic entities, but as important agents of global history. This revaluation has also affected our view of the steppe queens. Since ancient times, they have enjoyed far more freedom than in sedentary civilisations. They took part, like men, in warfare, politics and trade, exerting a strong influence over their husbands.

Despite a great advance in scientific research into the status of women among the steppe civilisations, there are still few contributions investigating the imaginaries they have aroused. Yet nomadic queens have fascinated not only scholars, but also artists, writers, film-makers and travellers. This conference will examine the image of the steppe queens between myth and history over the centuries. In an interdisciplinary approach designed to bring together Eastern and Western perspectives, it will welcome contributions from specialists in history, literature and the arts, with the aim of drawing up a first comparative and diachronic picture of the subject by combining their points of view.

PROGRAMME

Thursday 21 March 2024

Salle du Conseil

Conference opening

9.30-9.40. Welcome of participants and introduction to the conference by Benedetta De Bonis (project *WISE*) and Alfonsina Bellio (GSRL)

9.40-10.00. Sarga Moussa (CNRS/Thalim), *Un orientalisme renouvelé*

First session

Imaginaries of the Amazons: myth, history, and archaeology

Chair: Alfonsina Bellio (GSRL)

10.00-10.30. Violaine Sebillotte Cuchet (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne), *Tomyris, la reine des steppes: un portrait mythico-historique*

10.30-11.00. Iaroslav Lebedynsky (INALCO), *'Amazones' et 'reines guerrières' chez les Scythes et Sarmates: l'interprétation des données archéologiques*

11.00-11.15. Discussion

11.15-11.45. Coffee break

Second session

Imaginaries of the Hunnic brides: history and literature

Chair: Thibaut Casagrande (Sorbonne Nouvelle/Thalim)

11.45-12.15. Katalin Escher (CY Cergy Paris Université), *Erekan et autres reines hunniques du V^e siècle: histoire et légendes de la famille d'Attila*

12.15-12.45. Alessandro Zironi (Università di Bologna), *Attila et les femmes*

12.45-13.00. Discussion

13.00-14.00. Lunch

Third session

Imaginaries of the Mongol queens: literature and the arts

Chair: Grégory Delaplace (GSRL)

14.00-14.30. Isabelle Charleux (GSRL), *La 'Sanniangzi' ('Troisième Dame') / Jönggen qatun (1551-1612), reine mongole sage et pro-chinoise, d'après les sources chinoises*

14.30-15.00. Enkhmaa Enkhbat (Università di Trento/Mongol Toli), *Poem of Queen Mandukhai Secen'. A poetic text handed down by sources from the classical Mongolian writing period*

15.00-15.30. Benedetta De Bonis (Sorbonne Nouvelle/Thalim), *L'orientalisme à l'épreuve. Khutulun, princesse guerrière, dans les littératures et les arts contemporains*

15.30-16.00. Discussion



Friday 22 March 2024

Salle Claude Simon

Fourth session

Imaginaries of the Turco-Mongolian queens: history and myth

Chair: Benedetta De Bonis (Sorbonne Nouvelle/Thalim)

10.00-10.30. Michele Bernardini (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), *Le rôle politique des femmes à l'époque de Timur*

10.30-11.00. Matthieu Chochoy (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn), *Le mythe d'Alan Qo'a dans l'historiographie française au XVIII^e siècle*

11.00-11.15. Discussion

11.15-11.45 Coffee break

Fifth session

Imaginaries of female steppe leaders: travels and cabinets de lecture

Chair: Sarga Moussa (CNRS/Thalim)

11.45-12.15. Virginie Tellier (CY Cergy Paris Université), *Portraits de cheffes de bordes, par deux voyageuses dans les steppes kalmoukes au XIX^e siècle*

12.15-12.45. Michele Morselli (Università di Bologna/Bibliothèque Marmottan), *Les Tartares, reines des cabinets de lecture: steppes et politique de Madame Cottin à Balzac (1806-1822)*

12.45-13.00 Discussion

13.00-14.00. Lunch

Sixth session

Imaginaries of Mongol women: popular culture, myth, and the arts

Chair: Isabelle Charleux (GSRL)

14.00-15.00. Eléa Boënnec (Sorbonne Université) and Isaline Saunier (GSRL), *Practices and reimagining of a women's iconographic repertoire from the past in contemporary Mongolian 'pop culture': social networks, video clips and illustrations*

15.00-15.30. Coffee break

15.30-16.00. Kenneth Linden (Rutgers University), *Women, Animals, and the Egalitarian Myth of the Mongol Empire*

16.00-16.30. Youn-mi Kim (Ewha Womans University), *Unveiling Female Agency: Empress Dowagers and the Pagodas of the Liao Empire*

16.30-17.00. Discussion

Conference closing