

THE MIDDLE AGES AND US

Series of activities organized for the general public by the Société des études médiévales du Québec for its 30th anniversary

A THEME TO CELEBRATE...

To celebrate its 30th anniversary, the Société des études médiévales du Québec (SÉMQ) is organizing a series of conferences aimed at a broad audience. Centered around the theme “The Middle Ages and Us” and conceived to promote the visibility and accessibility of Medieval Studies, these interventions are meant to answer a simple yet fundamental question: Of what use are the Middle Ages today? By this, they wish to shed some light on the meaning of the Medieval period in today’s society while at the same time explore what unites the Medievalists to their object of study.

Many are the questions and problems pertaining to the retrospective gaze that Medievalists cast upon the Middle Ages. Recently, Francis Gingras, in *Profession médiéviste* (PUM, 2014), pointed out how scholars studying the Middle Ages always navigate between “the phantasm of origins and the temptation of strangeness” for they are “always susceptible of using the Medieval period to construct a certain identity (linguistic, national, religious)”. Such considerations can also be applied to other aspects of contemporary society with which Medievalists may identify themselves, be they related to the 21st century, the American continent, Québec or the discipline in which each of them is specialized. We also know that the Middle Ages – or at least a “certain idea” of the period – continue to fuel the imagination of many and act as a model or anti-model for ethical or political thought and policies. Yet at other times, the Middle Ages are absent from debates and discussions for which a certain knowledge of languages, literature, art, music, philosophy and history of the period would be profitable.

In short, the proposed cycle of activities has many objectives. While addressing questions pertaining to each of the speakers’ competence and field of research, the conferences aim at reminding the pertinence of Medieval studies while deconstructing myths and misconceptions about the Middle Ages.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The cycle of activities for the general public is open to many different venues. From papers given in institutions such as Cegeps and public libraries to interviews accorded to papers or television and radio shows, all modes of communication and platforms are welcome. Most notably, associations with organisms such as the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ) and museums are possible.

If you wish to obtain further information or to participate in the event as a professor or graduate student, please contact Professor Michel Hébert at the following address: hebert.michel@uqam.ca.