

Autobiography in Early Modern France: 1450-1650 (Fellowship von Dr. Nicolae-Alexandru Virastau am Dahlem Humanities Center)

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"The Invention of Memoirs in Renaissance France" examines the emergence of memoirs in sixteenth-century France. Renaissance autobiographical works have always been studied in light of Jacob Burckardt's theory that Renaissance culture was the site of the birth of the modern individual. Leading scholars of the memoir genre consider them the starting point of the history of literary autobiography that led to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Confessions. So far, my research has shown that the majority of Renaissance autobiographical works were created by multiple authors, often rewritten, edited and completed after the nominal author's death by family heirs and professional printers specializing in editing Memoirs and first-person chronicles. The rhetorical category of the eyewitness testimony proved to be a fruitful angle of research for the study of Memoirs and other autobiographical works during the Renaissance. In this project, I expand the objects of my research and examine the links between Renaissance memoirs and other life-writings that could be qualified as autobiography, in the widest sense possible: historical commentaries, first-person chronicles, books of reason and journals. This research is limited to printed French texts of the Renaissance. It aims to publish a book on Renaissance autobiography that comprises both literary autobiographies (Memoirs and Lives) and ordinary life-writings (books of reasons, for instance).

Projektbeteiligte

Prof. Dr. Paul Nolte

Freie Universität Berlin
Dahlem Humanities Center (DHC)
Berlin

Dr. Nicolae-Alexandru Virastau

Columbia University in the
City of New York
Department of French
Columbia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
New York, NY
USA

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Early Modern French Autobiography