

CLASSIS AFRICANA - VI Dies Academicus

Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 10-11 febbraio 2023—Milano Piazza Pio XI, 2—Sala delle Accademie "E. Galbiati"

Envisioning and representing Africa

Coordinators: Eileen Julien and Mena B. Lafkioui

Each of the remarkably diverse traditions that compose the complex mosaic of African cultures has elaborated, over the centuries, its own forms, spaces and modalities of self-representation, written and unwritten.

In this regard, taking as its theme *autobiography* in tandem with *biography*, the V *Dies Academicus* of the Ambrosian Academy's Classis Africana aims to explore self-writing in its myriad forms and modalities--from memoir, confession, journal, travel writing, letters and diary to semi-autobiographical fiction, interviews, visual arts and fashion. Self-writing allows subjects to relate and, above all, to *invent* themselves across diverse circumstances and life experiences. Biography, which may come to us also via a range of media--oral narrative, written texts, documentary film, graphic and musical arts--brings into play multiple perspectives on its subject, developed retrospectively and perhaps from a distance, adumbrating and contextualizing more deliberately and sometimes projecting its subject as the very emblem of an historical time and place.

What are the pleasures of autobiography and biography for readers? Who are their readers, listeners or spectators? Can we identify historical moments in which these forms have greater or lesser appeal as narratives of an individual life or as ethnographic accounts? Is either tendency better? Are readings of African autobiographies as "ethnographic" problematic?

Taking into account formal properties, as well as the challenges and possibilities of diverse media and genres, the study of autobiography and biography allows us to traverse centuries, ethnicities, states, languages and cultures, enabling an understanding of the intimate relationship of varied geo-political and historical contexts and the arts of representation.

Friday, 10th February 2023

4.30 pm New Academicians' appointment and official opening of the *Dies Academicus*

5.00 pm
Session I – *Autobiographies* (Chair: Eileen Julien and Mena B. Lafkioui)

Tassadit Yacine (Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales - Paris), *Féminité, modes de résistances et subjectivité dans le monde kabyle (XIX-XXème siècle), en Algérie*

Emanuele Marcello Ciampini (Università Ca' Foscari - Venice), *On the Egyptian (pharaonic) autobiographies as a literary genre*

Emanuela Trevisan Semi (Università Ca' Foscari - Venice), *Letters as autobiography among the Beta Israel, the case of Taamrat Emmanuel and Tadesse Yacov, uncle and nephew in the resistance against Italian occupation. (online)*

Saturday, 11th February 2023

9.30 am
Session II – *Biographies* (Chairs Mena B. Lafkioui)

Nafisa Valieva (Collège de France - Paris), *Reading of the 'Life of Lālibalā' (Gadla Lālibalā) as a biography and a portrait of Ethiopian society*

Annunziata Di Rienzo (Sapienza Università - Rome), "Perfect in all virtue". *Life and Encomium of John Colobos: monastic life and cultural crossroads at Sketis*

Mohamed Meouak (Universidad de Cádiz), *Résultats préliminaires d'une enquête sur les Wafayāt d'Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Wanṣarīsī (mort en 1508): un recueil de notices nécrologiques/biographiques contenant des matériaux anthroponymiques et toponymiques berbères*

Mena B. Lafkioui (Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales - Centre national de recherche scientifique - Paris), *Abdelkrim. A never-ending biographical narrative of a unique Amazigh leader*

2.45 pm
Session III – *Film biography* (Chairs Eileen Julien)

Introductionary remarks by Samba Gadjigo (Mt. Holyoke College, Massachusetts, USA), author of *Ousmane Sembène: A Revolutionary Artist* and Eileen Julien (Indiana University, USA)

La noire de ... (Black Girl) [1966], Screening

Sembène [2016], Screening

5.50 pm
Conclusion and greetings

L'incontro sarà trasmesso sul canale YouTube dell'Ambrosiana: <https://www.youtube.com/@bibliotecaambrosianamilano4683>

Ingresso libero fino ad esaurimento dei posti in sala