



CORRESPONDENCES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY – LETTERS BETWEEN NATIONS

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Call for papers for a single or double panel (up to 8 papers)

While the 19th century has often and rightly been seen as the moment when European societies asserted their nationhood, the 18th century can be considered as the laboratory where this phenomenon was worked out. Alongside the spirit of universalism characteristic of the *philosophes*, the age of Enlightenment also contributed to the emergence or consolidation of representations of individual national identity.

The aim of this panel is enquire into the role played in this process by correspondences, starting with a series of questions around three major themes :

1. National identity and correspondences, between private and public

- What particular role does the ambiguous connection between public and private particular to correspondences play in the creation, circulation and transformation of representations of national identity?
- Can the images of nation conveyed in these correspondences be seen as the other face of the universalism shown in other forms of writing overtly aimed at a broader public?
- What is the target readership – at times private, at times more public – of the images of national identity relayed in these correspondences?
- What was the impact of these correspondences on these different readerships, in terms of the way in which they conceptualised national identity?

2. Scales of space : the national versus the local, the regional and the global in 18th-century correspondences

- the place where a letter is written and the place to which it is sent are among the elements that structure the letter as object. That being so, what role have letters, written in one place and addressed to one or more people in another place, played in the stylisation and perception of national cultural identities?
- How, within these correspondences, does the dimension of national identity relate to other – local, regional, even universal or global – identities?

3. National languages in 18th-century epistolary culture

- What particular role does the use of different European languages play in the ‘communication’ of these national identities?
- Which languages and which national ‘terminologies’ are diffused in 18th-century epistolary culture?

In considering these questions, the emphasis will be placed on transnational correspondences that connect individuals coming from distinct national or linguistic spaces.

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