International workshop

Construction, manifestation and dynamics of formulaic patterns in texts and paintings. Historical perspectives and modern technologies

November 28th-29th, 2008, University of Trier/Germany

Call for papers

From a historic point of view, formulaic patterns form a constitutive part of linguistic and visual representations of common knowledge. They were a main element of verbal and non-verbal communication in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era. In the field of language, they were mainly constructed by means of syntactically, semantically and pragmatically more or less set phrases or texts. In the field of non-verbal communication, they became manifest in different genres of art comprising one or more proverbial sayings, e.g. in the form of tapestries, paintings, graphic cycles, arts and crafts or iconographic designs. The proverb integrated into a painting – even in hidden form – allowed the work of art to be interpreted and "read". These linguistic and visual media constituted an outstanding method of cultural communication and together as well as on their own shaped our traditions of communication. On the one hand, they were based on culturally produced conventions of social usage. On the other hand, they also were subject to processes of historic change.

In this sense, the tradition of emblematic designs consistently but also differently continued the Late Medieval and Early Modern tradition of proverbial paintings. What has been disregarded so far is the enormous relevance of clearly visible or enigmatic proverbs to Pre-Modern forms of art. Linguistic formulaic patterns are also characteristic for our modern-day communication, although essential shifts in the usage of single types of set phrases can be observed here – at least with regard to Standard German. Less standardized and codified languages like Yiddish and Luxembourgish or contemporary dialects and colloquial languages treat formulaic patterns in different ways. Here, recent research has been able to show clear distinctions especially with regard to frequency and functions of formulaic patterns compared with Standard German.

So far historical cultural sciences have given little attention to form, formation, and function of formulaic ritualised methods of communication. The reciprocal influence of visual and linguistic media has also been left untouched, with the exception of isolated studies.

The international workshop aims to explore the construction, manifestation, and dynamics of formulaic patterns in an interdisciplinary approach under the perspectives of Linguistics and Art History. The idea of this workshop initiated in the research group "Communication as space of knowledge: Cultural contexts, tradition and change" of the Historical Cultural Research Centre at Trier as well as in the project "Historical formulaic language and traditions of communication" sponsored by the Sofja-Kovalevskaja-Award of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation. Central objects of research will be historic texts from different genres and languages (poetry and fiction, non-literary sources, lexicographic and grammatographic sources) and Medieval as well as (Early) Modern works of art (painting, graphic, sculpture, and arts and crafts). Furthermore, there shall be room to discuss the possibilities and potentials of editing, annotating and preserving linguistic and visual formulaic patterns with the help of modern technologies.

The following list of key words derives from this complex of themes and should be regarded as a starting point for further thoughts:

- form(s) and function(s) of formulaic patterns in texts and paintings
- cultural formation of formulaic patterns in texts and paintings
- genesis and identification of formulaic phrases
- divergency and congruency in visual and textual sources
- history of mediality of proverbs and proverbial paintings
- electronic systematization, annotation and preservation of formulaic patterns
- search routines in texts
- processes of semantic and structural stability and possibilities of variation

Contributions by art historians, philologists (also from the fields of dialectology, computer and corpus linguistics) as well as by other experts from cultural-historical disciplines are especially welcome. The lectures should not exceed 20 minutes to allow enough room for discussion.

You are kindly invited to send abstracts of up to one page as MS-Word-file to the following e-mail-address: filatkin(at)uni-trier.de. Deadline for the submission of abstracts is: **May 15, 2008**.

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and the Historical Cultural Research Centre, Trier working team,

in cooperation with the Municipal Library of Trier.

Further information:
Historical Cultural Research Centre, Trier working team, http://www.hkfz.uni-trier.de
Project VIII, 01: "Historical formulaic language and traditions of communication" (project leader: Dr. Filatkina, http://www.hifos.uni-trier.de)
Project VIII, 02: Gnomical knowledge in the space of the painting. The visualization of proverbs in the art of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era (project leader: Dr. Muench)
Project VIII, 03: Form and formation of spaces of knowledge of linguistic conceptualization: Yiddish phraseology in the context of European languages (project leader: Dr. Kleine)

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