

## **Conflicting Chronologies in the Pre-modern World: Measuring Time from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and Renaissance**

4-6 October 2018

### **Call for Papers**

Since Antiquity the reckoning of days, months, years, and whole epochs has always involved degrees of fluidity. Classical poets divided the mythical past into five ages of man, while astronomers developed increasingly accurate observations of the movements of the sun, moon, and stars to mark the seasons, the calendar, and to predict the weather and eclipses. For dating historical events, multiple time-constructions were used, including Olympiads, political and religious office, regnal eras, generational reckoning, and the Julian calendar. Attempts at synchronisation often conspired with political agenda and could lead to conflicting chronologies. With Christianity came new temporal problems, as AD dating began to dominate previous methods of reckoning. In addition, medieval Christians needed certain time calculations for liturgical use, including the date of Easter and the hours of the day in prayer. At the same time, they calculated and recalculated the six ages of the world and developed an elaborate framework for the apocalypse, the end of all time. By the Renaissance, the rediscovery of ancient time-reckoning and the origins (and ends) of ancient civilisations presented fresh challenges: thinkers wrestled with different time-keeping systems as they sought to reconstruct a historical 'origin identity' for a place or a city alongside the practical realities of contemporary Christian life.

Questions of chronology in specific historical periods (e.g. ancient Greece, Augustan Rome, medieval England, the Renaissance) have received a lot of attention. This interdisciplinary conference will build on these studies by offering scholars a chance to come together and engage in comparative work. The plenaries and papers will consider problems of chronology and the varied mechanisms for measuring and marking time in the pre-modern world. We seek 20-minute papers that pursue the following lines of inquiry in any period from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and Renaissance

- conflicting chronological systems in historiography, poetry, annals, astronomy, chronicles, homilies, and saints' lives;
- the temporal horizon between myth (or legend) and history in different ways of writing (e.g. historiography, poetry, annals, astronomy, chronicles, homilies, saints' lives);
- questions arising from irregularities, competing chronological systems, record loss, falsification, or problems of interpretation in pre-modern chronology;
- how historical time is defined and mapped out in historiographical and/or literary space(s);
- the regulation or synchronising of time and construction of identity;
- the representation of time in historiographical and/or literary narrative;

*Continued overleaf*

- the Christianisation of the calendar in books, liturgy, observances, medieval chronicles, saints' lives;
- considerations of end-times and salvation history;
- the rediscovery of ancient time-reckoning problems in the middle ages and Renaissance and attempts to resolve them.

Abstracts (max. 250 words) should be submitted by Friday, June 15, 2018 to [ConflictingChronologies@gmail.com](mailto:ConflictingChronologies@gmail.com). All contributors and participants will be required to pay a conference fee. If you are an experienced academic willing to act as a chair of session please write to the conference organisers.

The keynote speakers are **Stephen Heyworth** (University of Oxford), *Responses to Caesar's Calendar in Vergil, Ovid, and the inscribed Fasti*, and **Roy Liuzza** (University of Tennessee), *Well-tempered instruments – measuring and marking the hours of the day in Early Medieval England*.

For more information contact the conference organisers **Helen Dixon** (UCD School of Classics) and **Rebecca Stephenson** (UCD School of English Drama Film) at [ConflictingChronologies@gmail.com](mailto:ConflictingChronologies@gmail.com).

### **Venue**

UCD Humanities Institute Ireland, University College Dublin, Republic of Ireland.  
Institiúid don Léann Daonna UCD, An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Clíath, Poblacht na hÉireann.  
([Get directions](#))

### **Sponsors**

The conference is generously supported by the UCD College of Arts and Humanities, the Humanities Institute of Ireland, and the School of Classics.